

China

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NEW LOOK OF WANGFUJING STREET



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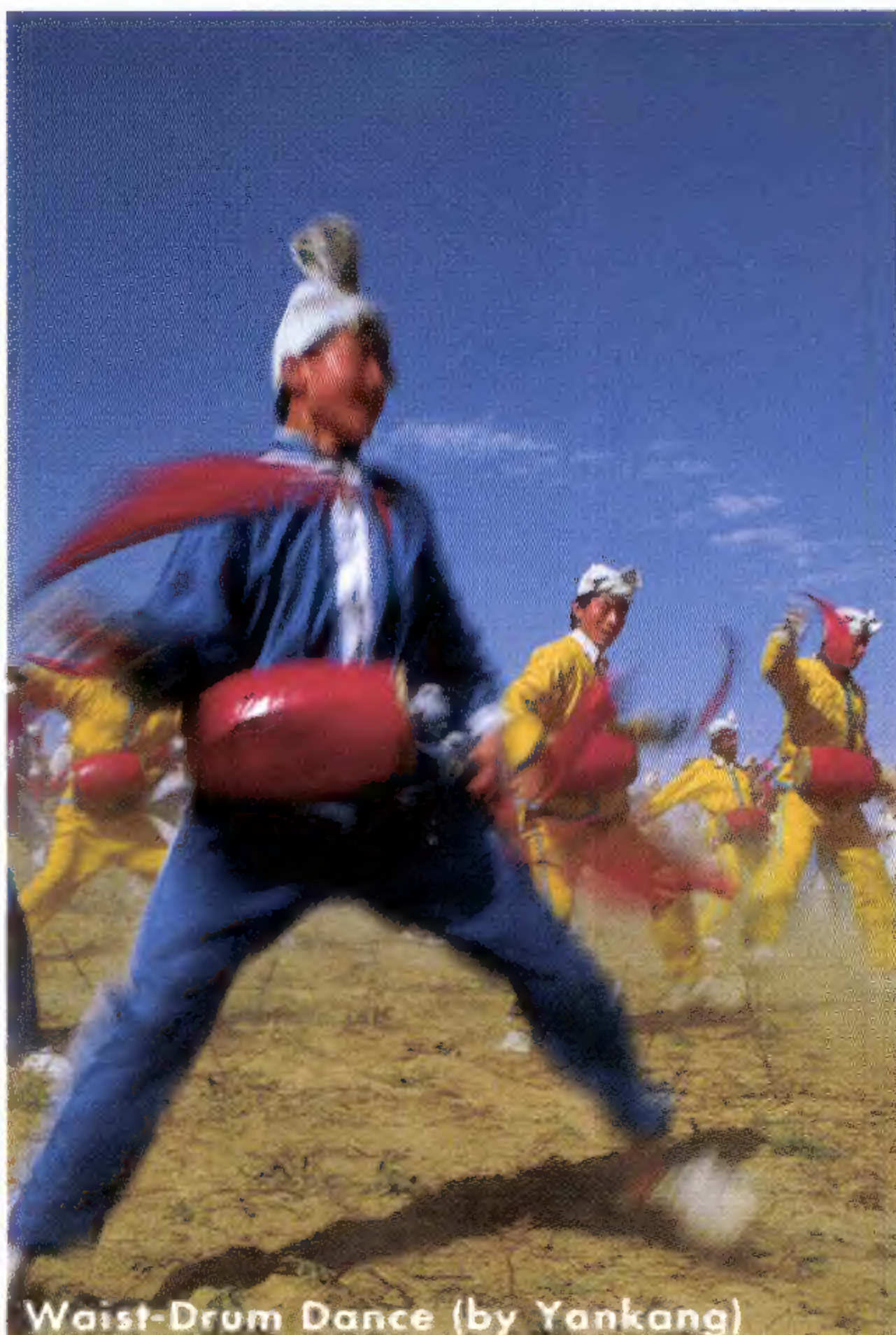
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China: New Century Kaleidoscope

Photo by Liu Jiaxiang Article by Li Wu

At the beginning of the new century, many new sights appear in China, such as the China Centenary Altar in Beijing, the brilliantly lit city walls of Xi'an, the ski field on Mount Emei and the Shanghai-flavour Hanyuan Bookshop in Shanghai.... But people expect much more in the tourism sector in the coming 100 years. A group of our readers and travel fans discuss their expectations.

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Blue Skies and Yellow Loess — Spring Festival in Northern Shaanxi

Photos by Yankang, Xiaogang, Yingzhuang, Kesheng
Article by Zhou Ping

The first lunar month is the time for rural spring celebrations in northern Shaanxi in Northwest China. Colourful parades, Waist-Drum Dance contests, Turning the Nine Bends and many other folk activities are all organised to celebrate the new year, to welcome the arrival of spring, and to pray for good harvests, safety and happiness. A group of Hong Kong travellers share their experiences in this area with us.

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Dragon Dances for the Year of the Dragon

The first year in the new millennium happens to be the Year of the Dragon. For the Chinese people, who regard the dragon highly, this has added meaning. There are numerous types of dragons in many

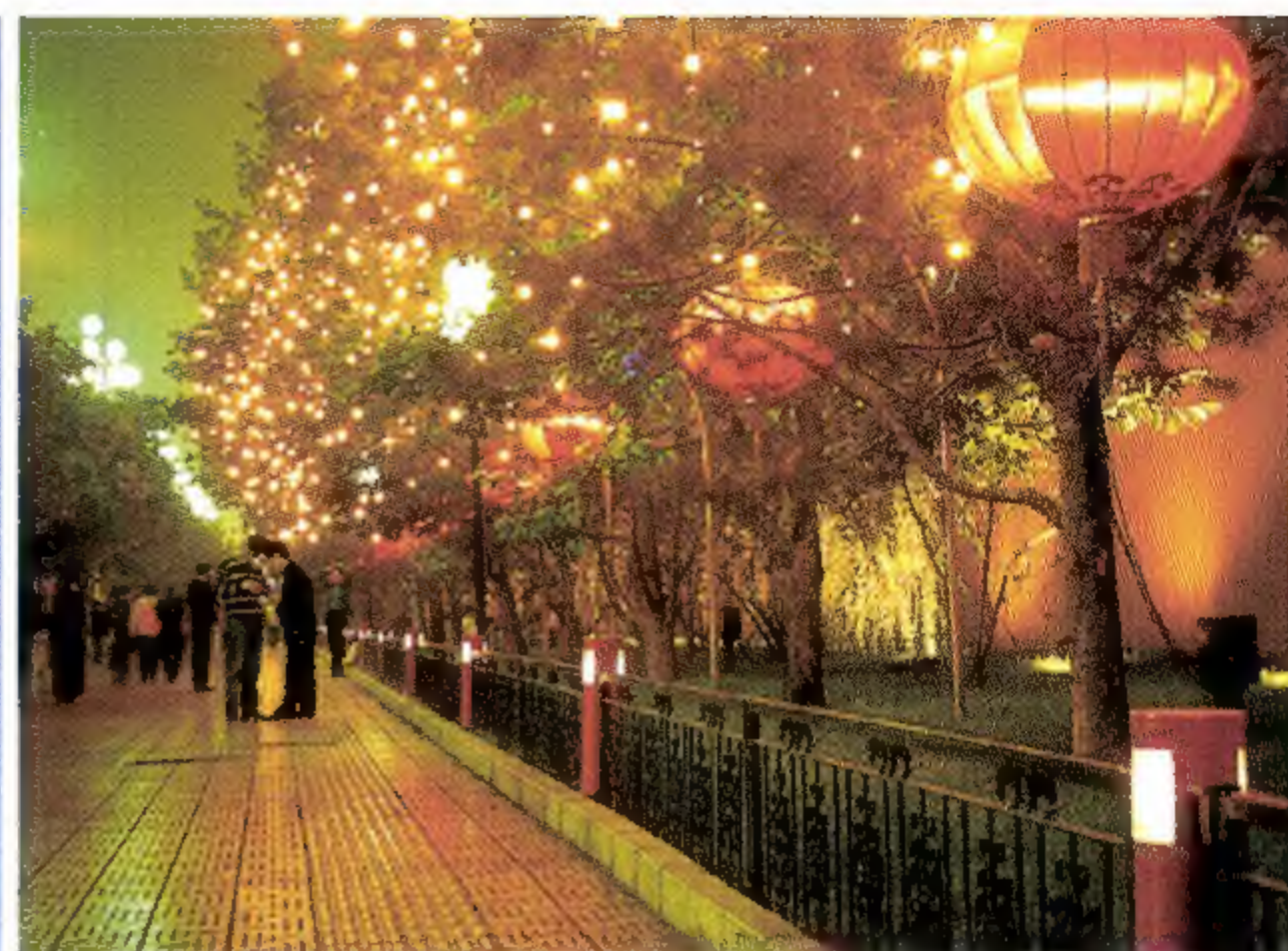
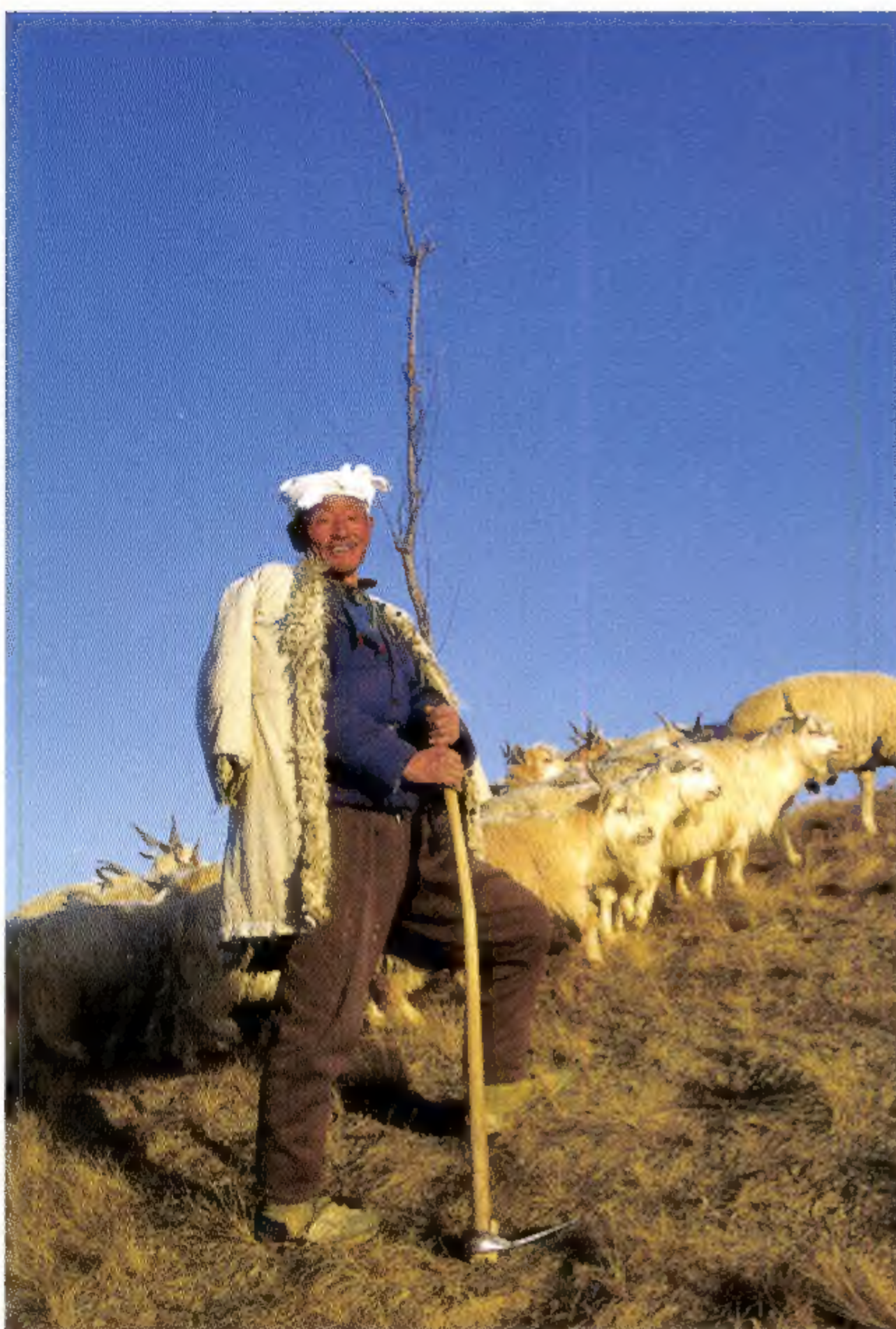


金璽
GOLD SEAL



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The New Look of Wangfujing
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Wangfujing Street in Beijing is the capital's busiest commercial street, where many famous shops are located. It is also a place of historical interest and local cultural features. Now, after eight years of renovation, Wangfujing has become a particularly worthwhile spot to visit, for both shopping and sightseeing.

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Photos & article by Liu Dongping

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FROM THE EDITOR

CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

We are now in the Year of the Dragon! The dragon is a legendary auspicious creature in the minds of Chinese people, and we hope that this divine beast can bring you a prosperous and successful year!

In this first Lunar New Year of the new millennium, we present to you a most jubilant New Year celebration in northern Shaanxi Province. During the first month of the lunar calendar, various activities and performances are held upon this primitive land of yellow earth to celebrate the New Year and the coming spring. Joy permeates the air and fills everyone's hearts, and distinctive events of rich ethnic colour take place to brighten up the carnival. Apart from the festivities, the province bewitches you with its local customs and folk art, as well as its scenic attractions such as the grand Hukou Waterfalls, a section of Yellow River, and the city of Yan'an, the home of the Red Army.... You will be deeply impressed by the simple and modest life style of the local people.

To hail this Year of the Dragon, we also have an interesting account of the exclusive dragon dance, which is one of the most popular performances in joyous occasions for the Chinese people. Just taking a look at the different kinds of dragons is an amusing experience: the fire dragon, lantern dragon, incense dragon, drunken dragon and even the bench dragon.

Entering a new era, China also boasts new attractions to bring about new thrills for touring the country. New scenic spots, new enjoyments, a new method of dining... there must be something that suits you.

Photo by Li Shaotong

Beijing New Year Tours

Beijing Municipal Tourism Administration has prepared 123 programmes to ensure that travellers can always find exciting activities in the first year of the new century, also the year of the dragon in the Chinese lunar calendar. In September 2000, Beijing will hold the International Tourism Festival, the third one of this kind held in the Chinese capital. A total of 2.3 million overseas tourists visited Beijing in the first 11 months of last year, a 16 percent increase over the previous year.

Longxing Temple Renovated, Hebei

Zhengding in North China's Hebei Province is famous for its ancient temples. One of these, the Longxing Temple, has just finished a major renovation and reopened to visitors. The repairing of the Dabei Tower in the temple is considered as the second largest project of its kind in the country since 1949 — next to the renovation of the Potala Palace in Lhasa only. The bronze statue of the 1,000-hand, 1,000-eye Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy) housed in the Dabei Tower is 21.3 metres tall and is a national treasure as one of China's earliest bronze statues.

Zhengding is 258 kilometres from Beijing. Among its numerous cultural relics and historical sites, five are under the state protection and seven have been listed as provincial-level cultural relics.



Festivals and Activities Coming Up

June 9 to 15: Pingyao Ancient City Culture Festival will be held in Pingyao, Shanxi.

June 18: Chongqing Three Gorges International Tourism Festival, Chongqing.

July: Dunhuang Scripture Cave Centennial Tourism Festival will be held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the cave. Activities include a cultural relics exhibition, an inaugural ceremony for the Scripture Cave Exhibition Hall, and performances.

Also in **July**, in Qingdao, where the famous Tsingtao Beer is produced, the Qingdao International Beer Festival will be held.



New Air Routes

Accompanying the coming of the new century, the Malaysian Airline System has inaugurated a new route between Malaysia and China — from Kuala Lumpur to Xiamen, a coastal city by the Taiwan Strait in East China's Fujian Province. The air route has two flights a week, every Monday and Friday. A B737 aircraft leaving Kuala Lumpur at 13:00 arrives at Xiamen at 17:05; it returns from Xiamen at 17:55. The flight number is MH390/10.

A Qingdao-Wuhan-Kunming air route has also started operation, linking the scenic coastal city of Qingdao in East China's Shandong Province, the Yangtse River city in Central China, Wuhan, and Kunming, the provincial capital of Yunnan in the Southwest. Inaugurated by the Shandong Branch of the China Eastern Airlines, flights are provided every Monday. An MD82 aircraft leaves Qingdao at 9:05, Wuhan at 11:50, and arrives in Kunming at 13:40. It returns at 14:30. The flight number is MU5417/8.

Foreign Investment Increasing in Rongcheng, Shandong

Rongcheng, a city on the tip of the Shandong Peninsular with a long beautiful coastal line, is also rich in cultural relics. This is why it has been attracting an increasing number of foreign investors. Many of the new projects are in the tourism industry. Among them are the Mashan Island Tourism Project, a joint project by the Xixiakou Group of China and a Canadian company, with an agreed investment of US\$30 million, and the Shidao Amusement Park, which will be jointly constructed by the Huiyuan Development Company of China Three-Star Group and the Hong Kong Chengquan Architectural Design Co. Ltd.

Rongcheng's potential in tourism has been well recognised. It received 1.1 million visitors during the first three quarters of last year, an increase of 34.5 percent over the same period of the previous year.

New Scenic Spot: Giant Pink Cliff in Zhejiang

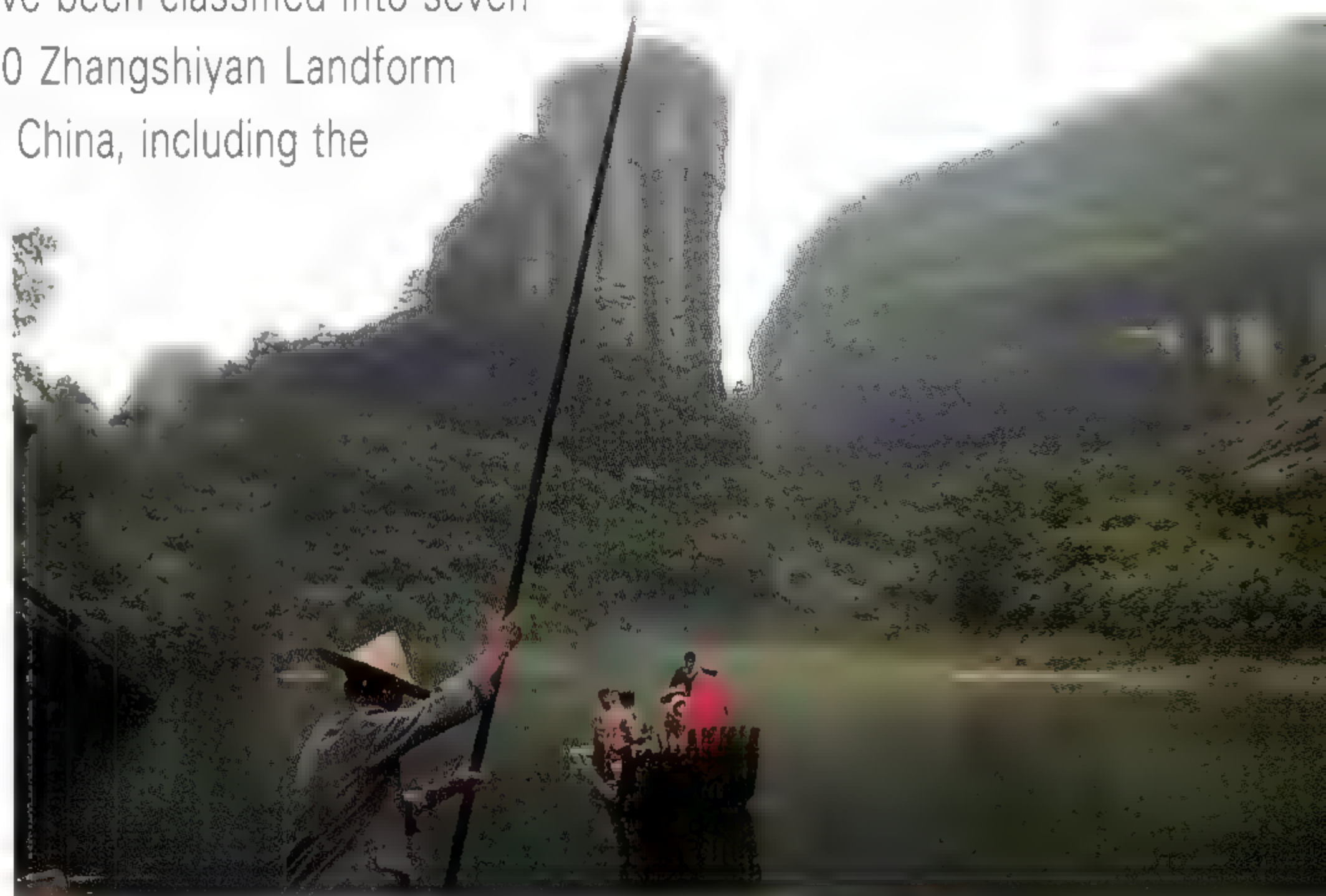
A smooth cliff, 650 metres wide and 300 metres high, is the focus of the newly opened Hengshan Ecotourism Area in East China's Zhejiang Province. Pink in colour, the cliff appears crimson at sunset, hence its name, Dahongyan, or Giant Red Cliff. The spot offers an unusually beautiful scene in autumn, when the trees around the cliff turn into a riot of colours and the deep pool at the foot of the cliff remains blue.

This area commands great fame in Chinese history. It is said that at the end of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D.24), a cave here served as a shelter and saved the life of Liu Xiu, who later founded the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220).

Landform Tours Becoming Popular in China

More and more Chinese choose scenic spots with unique landforms as their tour destinations. On the other hand, many new scenic areas with geographic attractions have been developed and the existing famous ones are catching up in improving their facilities.

The Chinese landforms have been classified into seven kinds by geographers. Over 30 Zhangshiyen Landform regions have been identified in China, including the Zhangshiyen and Canyon mountains in Hebei, Mount Yuntai in Henan and Wulao Peak in Shanxi. Danxia landscapes are more widely spread in southern China, with 500 spots listed, including the Danxia Mountain in Guangdong, Wuyi Mountain in Fujian and Longhu Mountain in Jiangxi.



New Forest Park, Hunan

Another national forest park has opened to the public in Hunan Province. Located 75 kilometres from the city proper of Yueyang, the Dayun Mountain National Forest Park covers an area of 40 square kilometres. It offers changing scenery all year round, and a number of new scenic spots have been developed. Dayun Mountain, 991.1 metres above sea level, stands at the centre of the forest park.

Civil Aviation Industry: Rapid Development

China's civil aviation industry will maintain rapid development in the new century. With an annual growth of eight percent in the first decade, the total freight volume will amount to 24 billion tons/kilometre in 2010.

At present, China has 143 civil aviation airports, of which 90 are capable of accommodating B737 planes and 19 of larger B747s. Now a total of 1,004 planes of various kinds are in service with the CAAC. Among its 1,122 regular air routes, 983 are domestic routes leading to 135 Chinese cities, and 131 international routes linking 64 overseas cities in 34 countries with China. In addition, there are 16 routes to Hong Kong and eight routes to Macao.

Forest Tours in Guangdong

Since 1986, a total of 12 national forest parks have been established in Guangdong Province. Among them are the Liuxi River Forest Park in Guangzhou, the Mount Xijiao Forest Park in Nanhai and the Mount Wutong Forest Park in Shenzhen. Meanwhile 22 provincial forest parks have been set up. In these parks, tourists can go sightseeing, camping, rock climbing, river rafting, and many other recreational activities. With an investment of 400 million from the relevant departments of the provincial government, infrastructure and facilities for accommodation, transportation, shopping and recreation have been greatly improved. There is easy access to these forest parks and their hotel capacity has reached 3,000 beds in total.

Ecological Tour in Panjin, Liaoning

Panjin on the Liaodong Peninsula has been long known for its red beach, a vast marshland grown with reeds and other seaside grasses which cover the beach like a red carpet. Its 80,000 hectares of reed field is one of the best preserved in the world, and a transient destination for many migratory water birds. Among the 230 species of birds found in this area, there are rare and endangered ones under state protection, such as the red-crested crane, white crane, white swan and black-mouthed gull. The 400 to 500 red-crested cranes who migrate to the beach regularly account for one quarter of the world's total of this species.

Panjin, a new city, has been increasing its investment in tourism, including building roads and improving facilities at scenic spots. The key projects covered in Panjin's ecotourism are the Water Bird World, Reed Maze and Red Beach Bridge. Eleven more projects are being developed, including the Shuangtaizi River Area and the Seaside Area.

Event

Kunming International Horticultural Expo '99 Extended

Kunming

You don't have to feel sorry if you have missed the Kunming International Horticultural Expo '99 which ended officially on October 31, 1999 — it has been announced that the Expo venue will open to public for six more months.

A golden opportunity to admire extraordinary horticulture and rare vegetation of various species, Kunming International Horticultural Expo '99 has received more than 9 million visitors up to October 20, 1999 since its opening on May 1.

To allow the Expo to function continuously as the base for the development of biological resources and let more visitors have a close encounter with nature, Yunnan Province decided to leave the venue open for six more months. In the extended period, all domestic and overseas exhibition counters will remain unchanged, and tickets sold previously during the Expo are still valid.



Scenic Spot

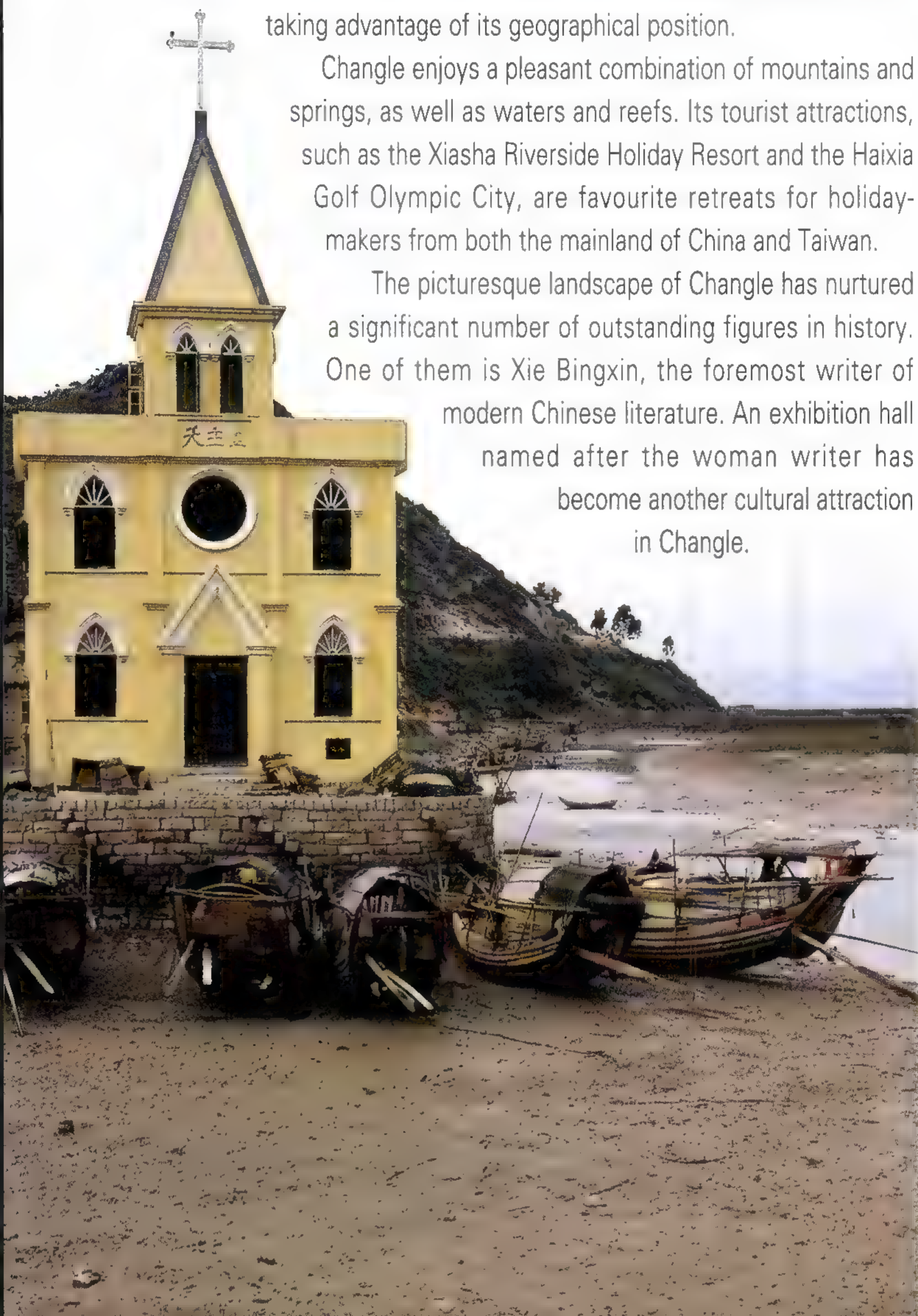
Changle Develops into a Seaside Tourist Resort

Changle

Situated at the Minjiang River estuary, Changle City in Fujian Province has emerged into a seaside travel destination, taking advantage of its geographical position.

Changle enjoys a pleasant combination of mountains and springs, as well as waters and reefs. Its tourist attractions, such as the Xiasha Riverside Holiday Resort and the Haixia Golf Olympic City, are favourite retreats for holiday-makers from both the mainland of China and Taiwan.

The picturesque landscape of Changle has nurtured a significant number of outstanding figures in history. One of them is Xie Bingxin, the foremost writer of modern Chinese literature. An exhibition hall named after the woman writer has become another cultural attraction in Changle.



News

Tianjin Offers TV Tower Climbing Tour

Tianjin

Tianjin Radio and TV Tower Administration Centre has launched a TV Tower Climbing Tour recently.

The tower, 415.2 metres high, is the second highest in Asia and the fourth in the world. Soaring from a lake with a beautiful environment, it is acclaimed as one of the Top Ten Best Scenes in Tianjin. From the 253-metre-high Viewing Hall, visitors can have a panoramic view of the city. It takes 30 minutes to climb up the 1,300 steps to the Viewing Hall. Many tourists think the climb is fun as well as good physical exercise.

Transport

Pudong Airport Starts Operation

Shanghai

Pudong International Airport in Shanghai is officially open to relieve the heavy burden of Hongqiao Airport. The new airport will gradually take over from the old one to handle most of the international flights. It is expected that by 2005, Pudong Airport will be able to serve 20 million passengers and deal with 750,000 tons of cargo. After an extension, its handling capability will rise to 80 million passengers and five million tons of cargo.

Covering an area of 278,000 square metres, the passenger terminal of Pudong Airport is designed with a rooftop imitating a seagull with stretched wings, adding a hint of grandeur to the architecture.

Pudong is a newly developed area on the east bank of the Huangpu River, facing downtown Shanghai on the west bank of the river. This new airport costing a whopping US\$1.57 billion will further enhance the economic development of both Pudong and the entire Shanghai.

Scenic Spot

The World's First Red Sandalwood Museum

Beijing The China Red Sandalwood Museum, the first of its kind in the world on such a large scale, with the richest collections of the highest quality, has been set up in Beijing.

Costing 200 million yuan in private investment, the museum covers an area of 25,000 square metres. Its building has a rich architectural style similar to that of ancient Chinese palaces.

The museum boasts four superb features: the facade is constructed completely of wood; the 1,000-square-metre square in front of the museum is paved with special palace materials; the museum combines ancient and modern architectural styles while maintaining palatial magnificence; and the entire museum is decorated with colourful Ming-dynasty paintings.

The main building of the museum has five floors and plans to collect 1,000 fine pieces of palace handicrafts carved out of precious wood. The exhibits include carvings of red sandalwood, ebony and

rosewood as well as several hundred pieces of furniture from the Ming and Qing dynasties. Among these precious exhibits is a magnificent 32.4-metre-long and 1.77-metre-wide three-dimensional red sandalwood sculpture called *Qingming Festival at the Riverside*.



News

A Map for Touring the Neighbourhood of New Century Hotel

Beijing The first colour edition of a tourist map of the periphery of Beijing New Century Hotel was published recently. This map details the places of interest and entertainment facilities in the vicinity of the hotel for the interest of the hotel's guests.

Located in the Baishiqiao District, near the Beijing Zoo and the Purple Bamboo Park, New Century Hotel is in the proximity of the city's waterways built in the Ming and Qing dynasties to link up downtown Beijing with the Summer Palace in the suburbs. It is also surrounded by a considerable number of tourist attractions such as temples, museums, aquarium, state library, TV tower, markets, parks and restaurants. Tourists can also sail on the restored waterways to the Summer Palace following the route of the Qing emperors.

The map also identifies the various types of roads in the vicinity, which makes a tour of the area, no matter on foot, by bicycle or by taxi, extremely convenient. Also available are a brief description, the opening hours and admission of these scenic spots, and travel time from the hotel to each one of them.

The map is printed in English, Chinese and Japanese and will be given out free to the hotel's patrons. An electronic version of it will be found online in the homepage of the hotel in the near future.

Beijing New Century Hotel is equipped with 738 guestrooms, suites and apartments, and a 25,000-square-metre office building. A total of seven restaurants and bars serving different cuisine satisfy the most discerning gourmets. Its entertainment complex is well appointed with a fitness centre, tennis courts, indoor swimming pool, bowling alleys, billiards room, table tennis room, golf course and sauna.

Scenic Spot

Tibet Museum Open to Public

Lhasa Located at the southeastern corner of Norbu Lingka, Lhasa, Tibet Museum has opened to the public. Not only a museum which houses and protects precious cultural relics, it also functions as a research and educational centre, making it the first museum in Tibet to perform these modern functions.

Standing on 53,959 square metres of land, the museum has a total floor space of 23,508 square metres. The exhibition hall, 10,451 square metres large, is a four-storey structure of traditional Tibetan architectural style built with granite and marble.

Exhibits of the museum include a great variety of pre-historical cultural relics, statues in different materials and postures in the images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, Tibetan classics handwritten with gold, silver and coral powder, colourful tangkas, and various Buddhist musical instruments, pottery and other handicrafts of typical Tibetan style. Outside the museum there is a scenic attraction featuring Tibetan ethnic culture. Facilities such as multi-functional halls, a cultural corridor and souvenir shops are also available.



SPECIAL THEMES





China:

New Century Kaleidoscope

The new century has dawned, and arriving with it, are many new things:

The China Centenary Altar, one of the great new buildings constructed to celebrate the new century, is solemnly opened in Beijing.

The 600-year-old ancient city walls of Xi'an are brightly lit in a striking new scene.

The caravan is widely welcomed as a new form of convenient travel.

The ski-field opened on Mount Emei is providing skiers with a new place to enjoy the sport.

The newly established drive-in cinema allows you to chat and watch the movie without annoying anyone.

The bookshop with traditional decor offers the delights of reading while sipping coffee.

The new craze in dining at a farmer's home encourages those with jaded appetites.

Readers, journalists and travellers sit together to discuss new ideas in travel, such as changing from organised tours to more leisure, style or lifestyle tours, or even the dream of space travel.



As history moved into the new millennium in a world-wide recorded event, Beijing showed off its great new creation — the China Centenary Altar.

Standing on Fuxing Road in western Beijing, the China Centenary Altar is another cultural wonder of the capital. Though called “altar”, it is


not like the traditional temple altars for worshipping the earth, heaven, sun or moon. It has no mysterious or religious meaning nor worshipping function. It uses the solemnity of the altar with a modern style and meaning to display China’s 5,000-year civilisation.

At the entrance is a stone tablet with big characters stating “China Centenary Altar” on the front, and behind is prose highlighting the development of the Chinese culture. Though only about 200 characters, this essay is strong and encouraging.

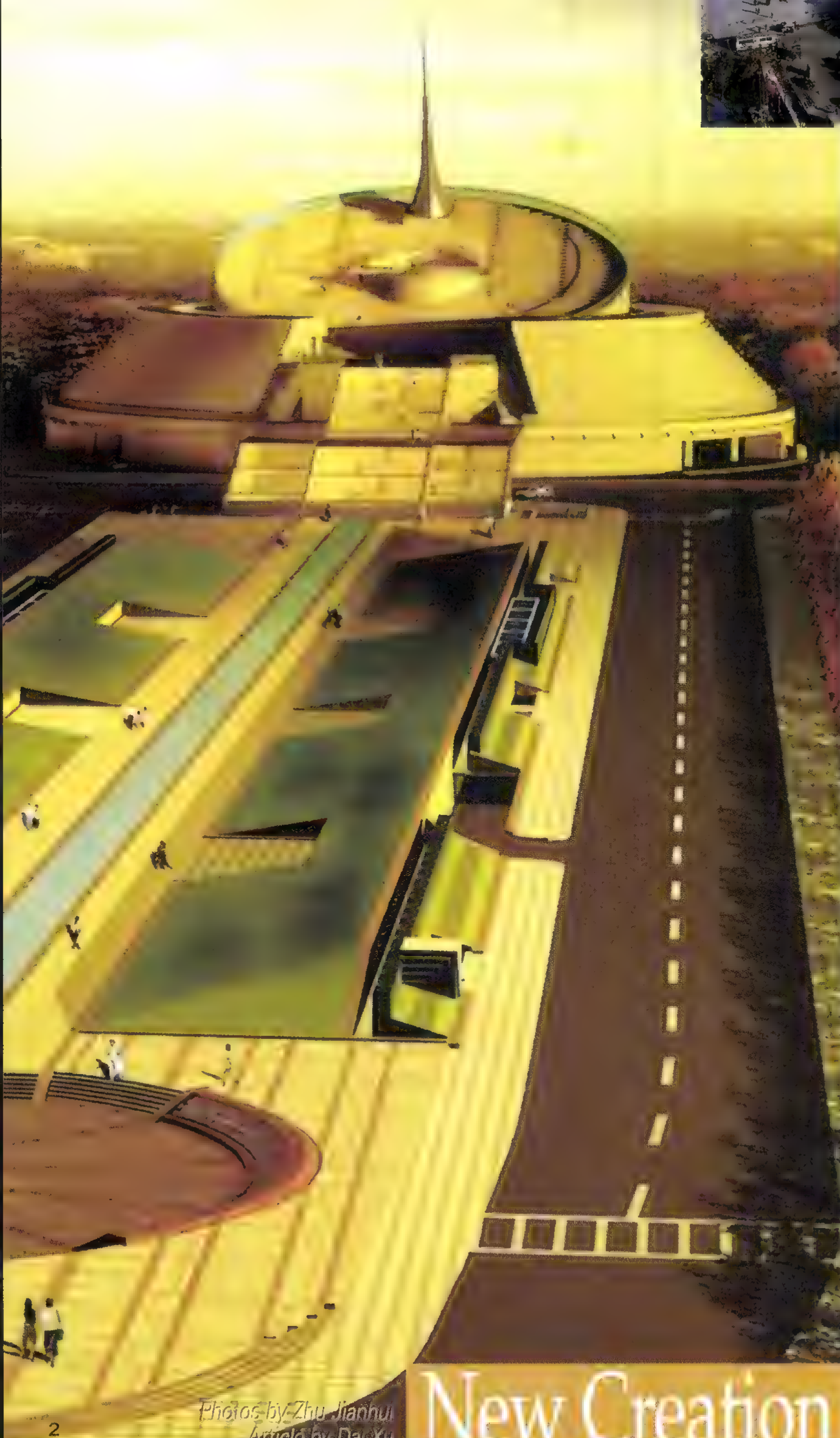
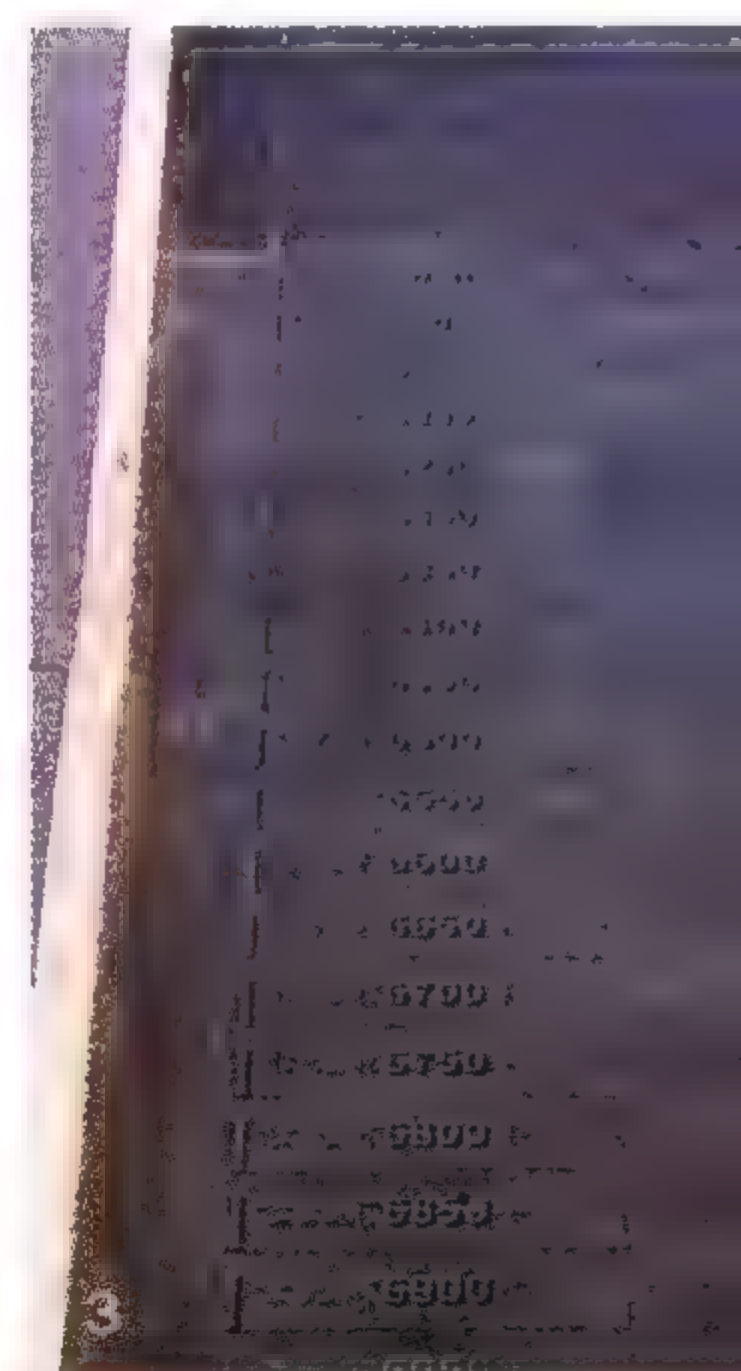
The eternal flame burns at the centre of the Eternal Flame Square, symbolising that the Chinese civilisation began with fire and that it exists together with the heaven and earth. The square’s two waterfalls symbolise the Yellow River and Yangtse River — the mother rivers of the Chinese nation.

A 300-metre-long and 12-metre-wide paved path connects the square with the altar. In its middle lies a three-metre-wide bronze block carved with 5,000 horizontal lines, which represent the 5,000 years of the Chinese history. A thin layer of water flows above the path like a long “river” of history. Walking through the path, you feel like passing through the 5,000 years of different dynasties and cannot help thinking about how fast time flies.

At the end of the path is the main structure — the altar, symbol of the universe. The 19-degree slanted surface of the altar rotates once every 12 hours — like the ancient Chinese sundial — symbolising the eternal movement of the universe. The 140-metre-long circled corridor represents the earth, whose vast land is the home of everyone. Outside, there are flights of 16 stone steps surrounding it. Inside, a circular gallery itself displays the strength of the earth and the heaven.

The most imposing is the 500-square-metre mural in the Grand Century Hall. Facing the mural, you seem to be reviewing the brilliant history of the Chinese nation and it is hard not to feel great pride. 

Previous page: A Beijing street in festive mood
1. The China Centenary Altar under construction
2. Model of the magnificent China Centenary Altar
3. The year lines on the bronze block



Photos by Zhu Jianhui
Article by Dai Xu

New Creation

China Centenary Altar



New Scene

Bright Lights on Ancient Walls of Xi'an

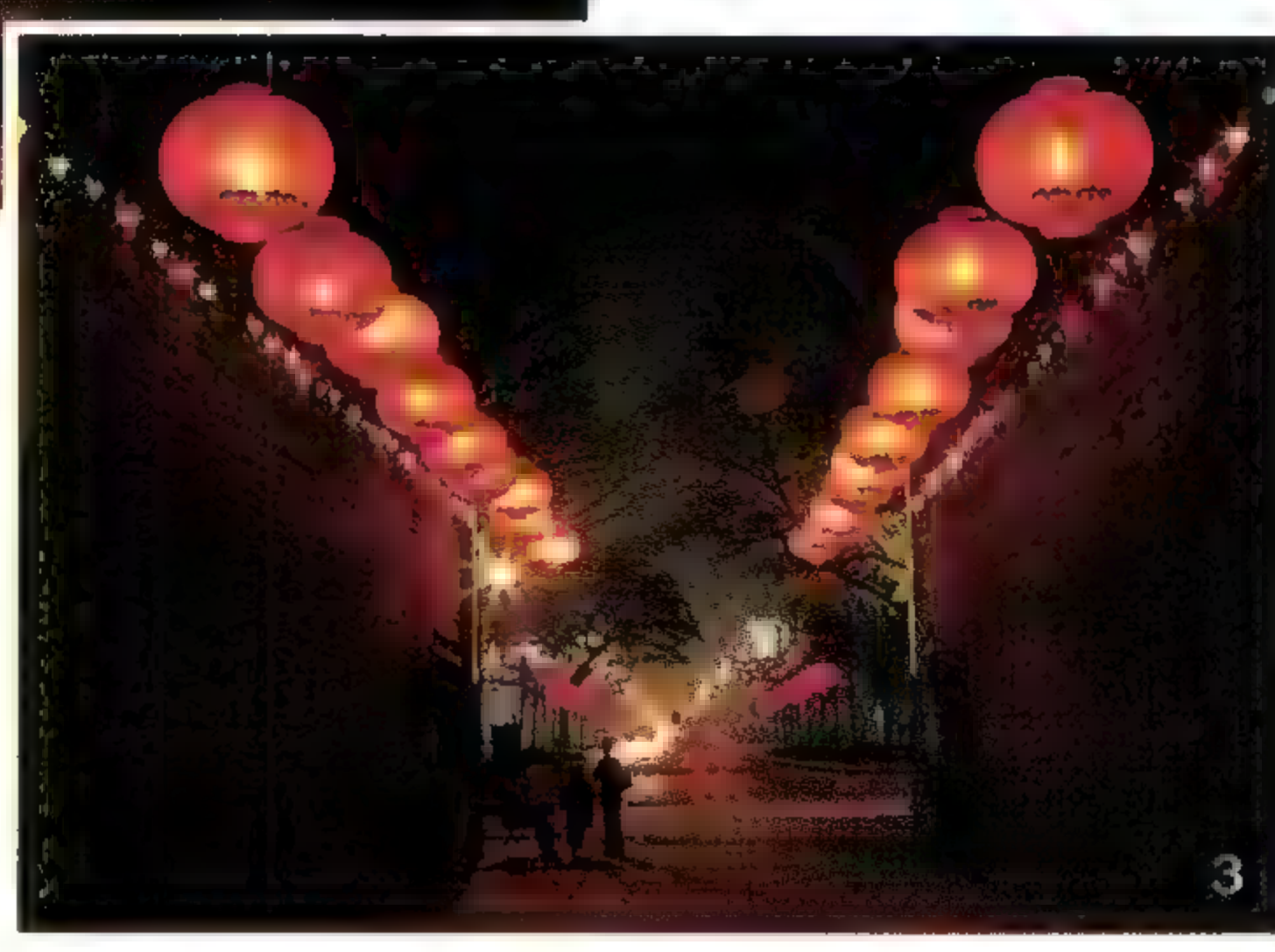
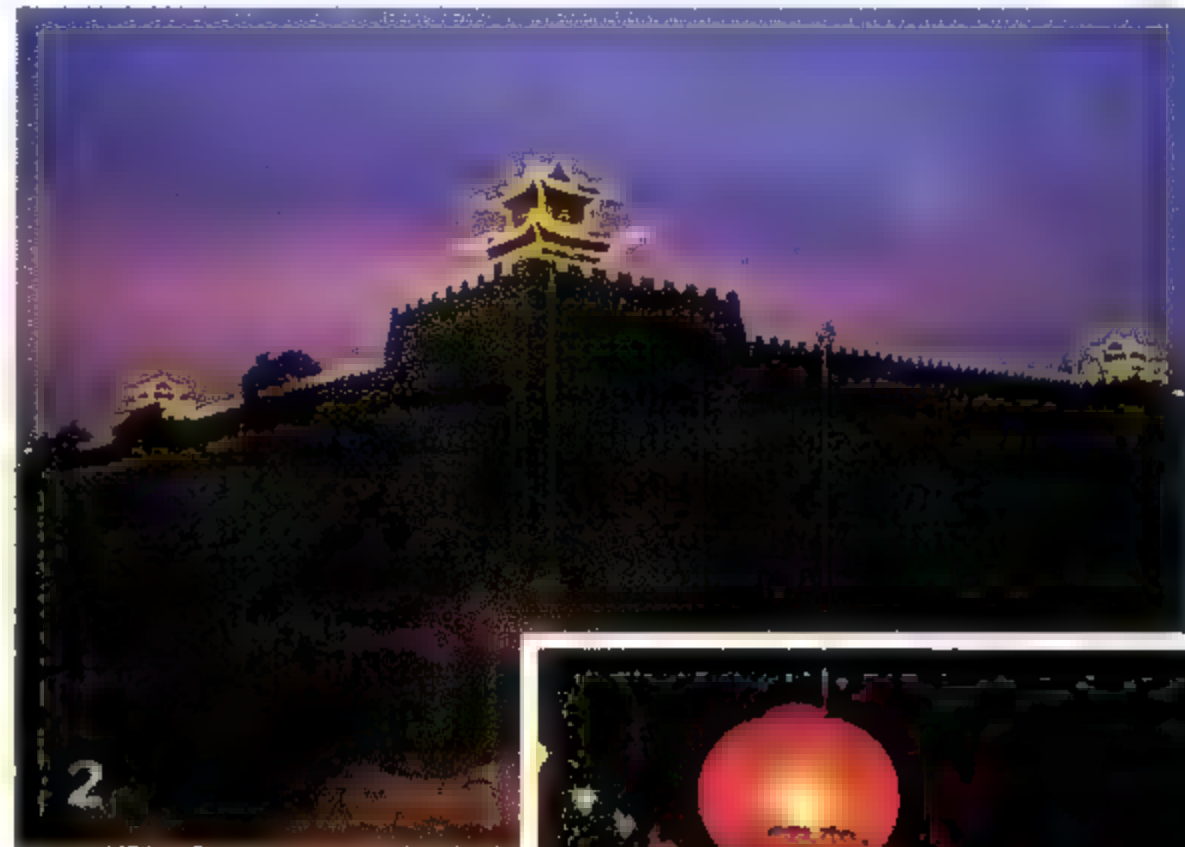
Article by Liu Jun
Photos by Li Shaotong

Among the seven ancient capitals in China, Chang'an (today's Xi'an) had the glory of being the capital of many dynasties. During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Chang'an was a great metropolis. The ancient city walls of Xi'an are 12 metres high and extend 12 kilometres, encircling the city as one of the best military strongholds of ancient times. After 600 years of existence, the city walls still retain their magnificence.

The city walls, one of the city's favourite tourist spots, now have become the most attractive night scene with their bright lights. At nightfall, the gate towers and tops of the wall are lit up with neon lights that cleverly emphasise their structure. Big red lanterns also hang in the gate towers and on the walls, which blend with hundreds of other lights in the square and moving car lights to create a net-like illuminated scene. The sight is particularly attractive when viewed from the square outside the South Gate. The South Gate Suspension Bridge was for emperors and high officials to enter or leave the city, so it was considered as an imperial way. Presently, this road is where the Xi'an people greeting their VIPs. In 1998, when US President Clinton visited Xi'an, he was welcomed and led to the city through this road.

There are also various folk activities held on or around the ancient city walls all year round. For example, during the past New Year, there was the Lantern Festival of Century Lights.

1. The city walls and the gate tower at night
2. The Southeast Corner Tower at dusk (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. The imperial way leading into the city





New Form of Travel

The Caravan: A Moving Home

Photos & article by Li Zhixiong

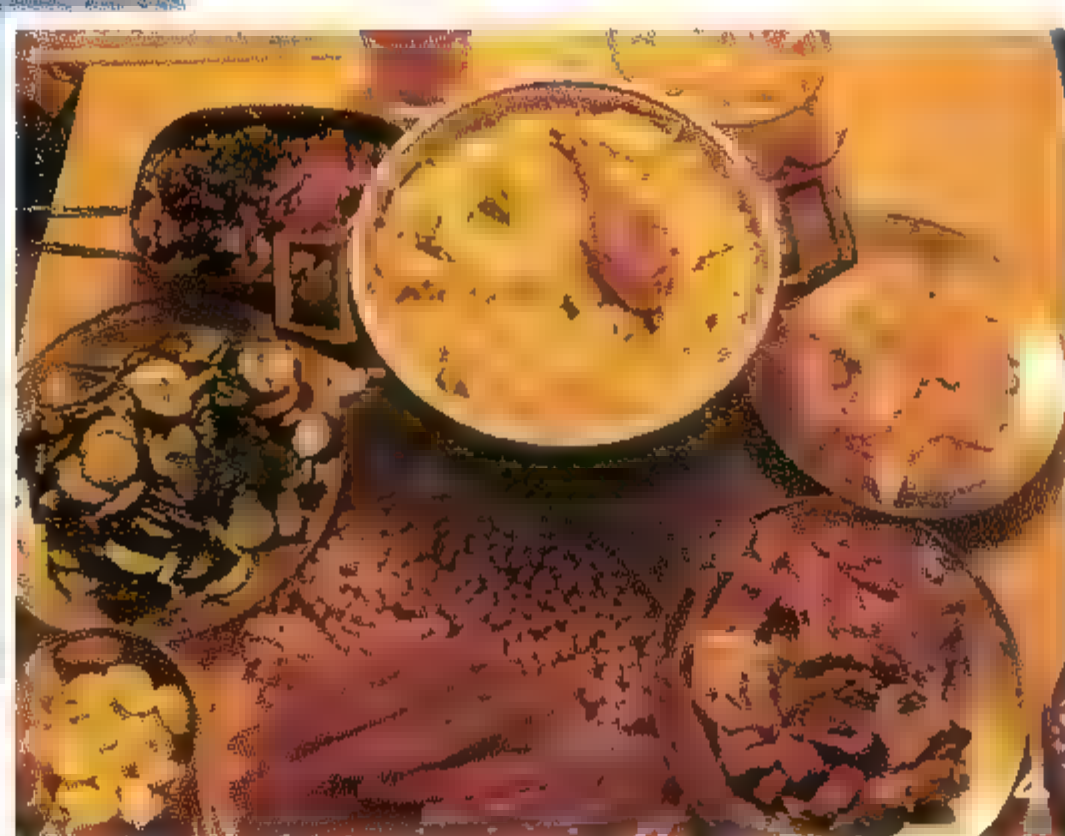
1. The best position for photos is on the top of the caravan.
2. Viewing the National Day parade on TV in the caravan
3. Fishing in Lashi Lake
4. One of our delicious dinners on the journey

Camping is no longer a new thing in China, but the use of caravans for travel certainly is. Recently I joined a tourist group of photography fans and travelled by caravan. Several companies in Kunming offer this new type of travel — the “living outdoors” style. The caravan, which can accommodate eight people, has folding beds, a bath, a kitchen, a TV, and a refrigerator. It combines living and travelling with entertainment.

Our photography group took the route from Kunming to Meili Snow Mountain and Dêqên in the Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in northwestern Yunnan. The whole journey in the caravan lasted 10 days. We were just like one big family, and things such as when to eat, sleep and stop for photography were all group decisions. During long periods of driving, we played cards or sang Karaoke songs. Our driver soon got used to our style as photographers — stopping here and there for us at any time. He even learned something about the aesthetics of photography and sometimes made the decision to stop himself, waking us from our dreams.

On October 1, we arrived at Lijiang. The National Day parade in Beijing was being broadcast that day, so we drove our caravan to the top of a mountain for better reception. Being able to arbitrarily change our program was one of the benefits of this kind of travel. Later, by Shuodu Lake at Zhongdian, our caravan





attracted many local Tibetans. While we prepared our food, the Tibetan girls danced for us. In the evening we held a party in the cold wind on the plateau. Beside Lashi Lake, our caravan became an attraction for the local children who, group by group, entered to have a look. They could not imagine how a vehicle that runs on the roads could be a place to live — even with a TV. They had never seen nor heard of such a thing.

Thanks to our caravan, we saw many different scenes, and enjoyed the style and the chance to take many good photos.



New Entertainment Trend

First Drive-in Cinema in Beijing

Photos & article by Zhu Jianhui

In recent years, the private car has made an impact on the lives of Beijing people. At first it was just a means of transportation, later a ride for leisure, and finally it has become a means of entertainment. Some clubs have emerged, such as cross-country or racing clubs. On holidays or festivals, many people drive their own cars around, some even group together to go on scenic tours to places like Tibet or Xinjiang.

Now car owners can follow the new trend in entertainment — watching a movie in the car. People say that music and art have no boundaries; now entertainment also has no boundary. The drive-in cinema, which originated in America, a country where everyone moves on wheels, has arrived in China.

Fenghuayuan Drive-in Cinema, Beijing's first outdoor cinema, is located just east of the Beijing Lufthansa Friendship Shopping Centre. Opened in February 1999, it attracts lots of Beijing car owners. Coloured lights decorate the road to its gate, over which lanterns hang. Driving along a willow-shaded path inside the gate, you feel as if you are going through a time-tunnel. Quiet replaces noise, and gives the semblance of the countryside.

The large courtyard covers eight hectares and can accommodate 100 cars. The large curved steel screen effectively withstands wind and rain, and reflects diffuse light so as not to affect nearby residents. Sound is transmitted through an FM channel to the car radio. No matter what the weather outside, everyone at the drive-in can sit in their "moving house" watching the film, and eat, drink or even chat, without annoying others. Behind the projection room is a café, which offers coffee, Chinese and Western snacks, and also arranges barbecues and bonfire parties.

There were quite a few customers when I went, but most did not come to see the film, but rather for the entertainment.



1. Seeing a film from your own car is a new experience in China.
2. When tired of sitting in the car, you may enjoy a cup of coffee in the outdoor café.
3. Satisfaction is guaranteed with three films in one night.





New Craze In Rural Dining

Photos & article by Yan Hong

In the spring last year, I saw two unusual words, *dian sha*, on a farmhouse door by a highway in Chengdu's suburbs. Literally they mean "choose and kill", referring to a dining style at this farmer house restaurant, where customers can choose a live animal for their own dinner.

Chengdu people are born gourmets and they have been continuously inventing new foods and new dining styles. Some diners, tired of banquets and regular restaurants, started this new farm-food dining style in the countryside.


It is a simple "choose and kill" method, where, on arrival at a farmer's home, you first point to one of the chickens, ducks, fish or rabbits the farmer has raised and then the cook kills it instantly and serves up your requested dishes. Some farmers offer a menu such as "five dishes from one chicken" or "four dishes from one rabbit" to attract customers. This type of dining is usually combined with some kind of entertainment, where you can enjoy the country life, including tea-drinking, fishing, viewing flowers, playing cards and chatting.

I decided to try this new trend in dining with some friends, so we drove to a village in Chengdu's suburbs. The farmer's house surrounded by bamboo groves is in typical western-Sichuan style. We sat on bamboo chairs at a wooden table and were served the home-grown Kuding tea, a typical farmer's tea of big leaves which tastes first bitter then sweet. We then went to choose a chicken and told the farmer to cook five different dishes with it. While waiting, we wandered around to the fish pond and watched other tourists playing the most popular game, mahjong.

Soon, four dishes and a soup were served to us: cold chicken,



diced chicken in hot sauce, fried chicken entrails... and chicken blood-curd soup. They were all delicious, with a strong Sichuan flavour. The food was not presented as nicely as in formal restaurants and the tableware was not so elegant, but the food had genuine fresh taste and quality. It was wonderful for urban dwellers to taste such delicious country food.

We ate and chatted while enjoying the scenery and country air filled with the fragrance of rape flowers. We were even more pleased on seeing the bill — only 70 yuan. Very cheap indeed! 



1. It is great entertainment to play cards and enjoy dinner in the peach orchard.
2. It may be best for visitors not to watch when the farmer kills the dinner.
3. The typical farmer's food, braised chicken, one of the five dishes from one chicken
4. Getting a close look at the flowers
5. Preparing food for the guests

New Location for Sports Skiing on Mount Emei


Photos by Liu Yong
Article by Xiao Feng

Mount Emei has long been famous for its beautiful snow scenery. The Mount Emei Scenic Area started to hold an annual Ice and Snow Festival last year, and has opened a ski-field. My curiosity was aroused and I went to investigate this new popular winter spot in mid-winter.

Mount Emei rises to a height of 3,099 metres at the southwestern fringe of Sichuan Basin. It snows from October to March on all the mountains that stand at least 1,500 metres above sea level.

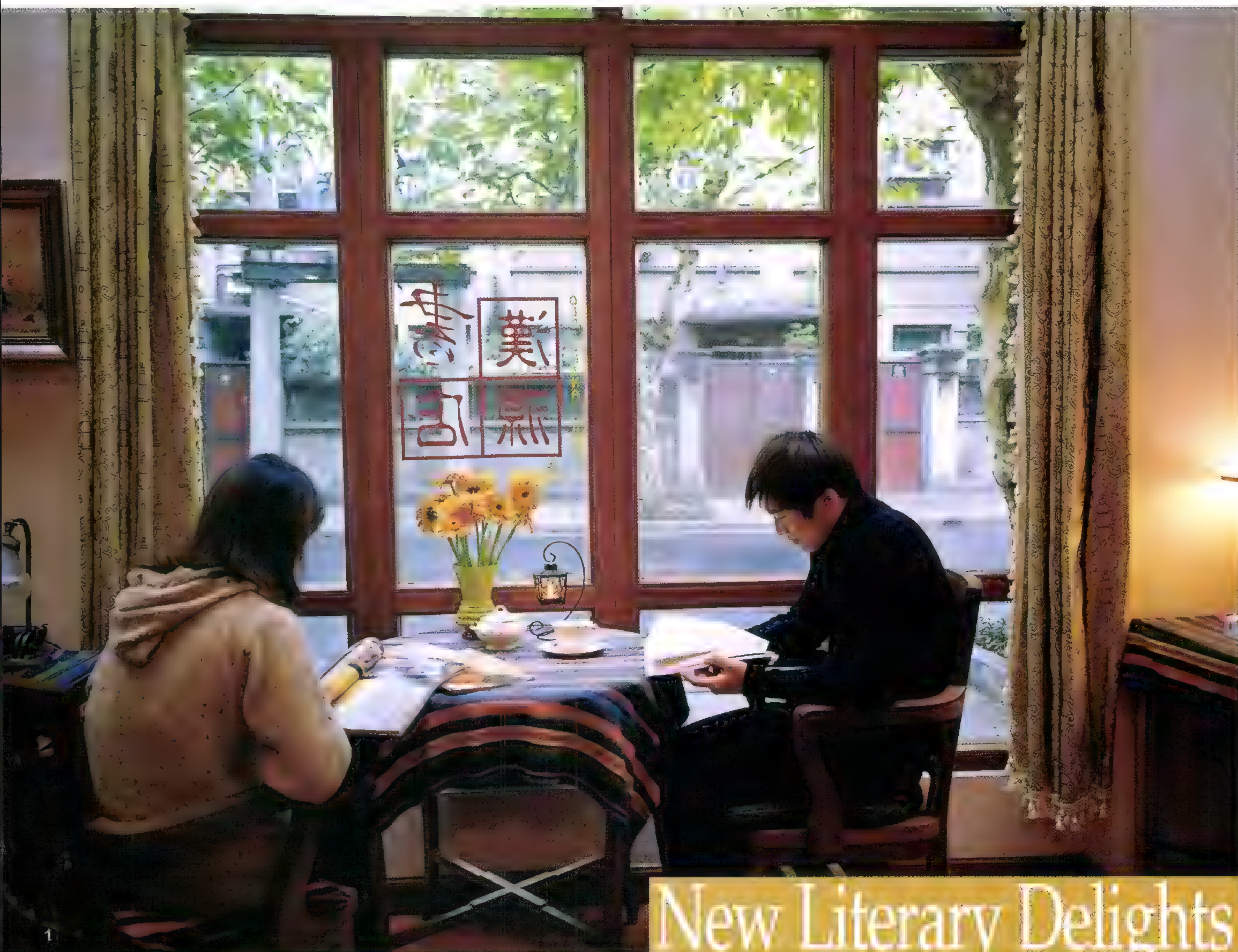
It took us about one hour by tourist minibus from Baoguo Temple at the foot of the mountain to go up to the ski-field at the altitude of 2,200 metres. Along the way, we saw some wonderful scenes of snow-covered mountain peaks and crystal ice drops of various shapes dangling from tree branches. The ski-field, about one hectare in size, is situated in a forest. It is the largest and best-equipped ski-field in southern China. It has areas for dining, entertainment, lodging, ice-carving and snow-sculpting, children's play and practice, and toboggan tracks and ski trails. All the

equipment is imported from Austria or Finland. Down coats and leather gloves can be rented there, and an oxygen bar and a clinic are available for those in need. All these amenities, in addition to the charming snow scenery, make this area a place of great attraction even if you don't want to ski or toboggan down the hill.

The strangest scene was watching the southerners trying to ski — unlike the northerners who were used to the snow, they were quite clumsy, often falling or losing control. It took some time for them to be able to stand properly on their skis and learn to glide over the snow. The more timid ones even gave up skiing and simply got on a toboggan and slid down easily to the bottom. 



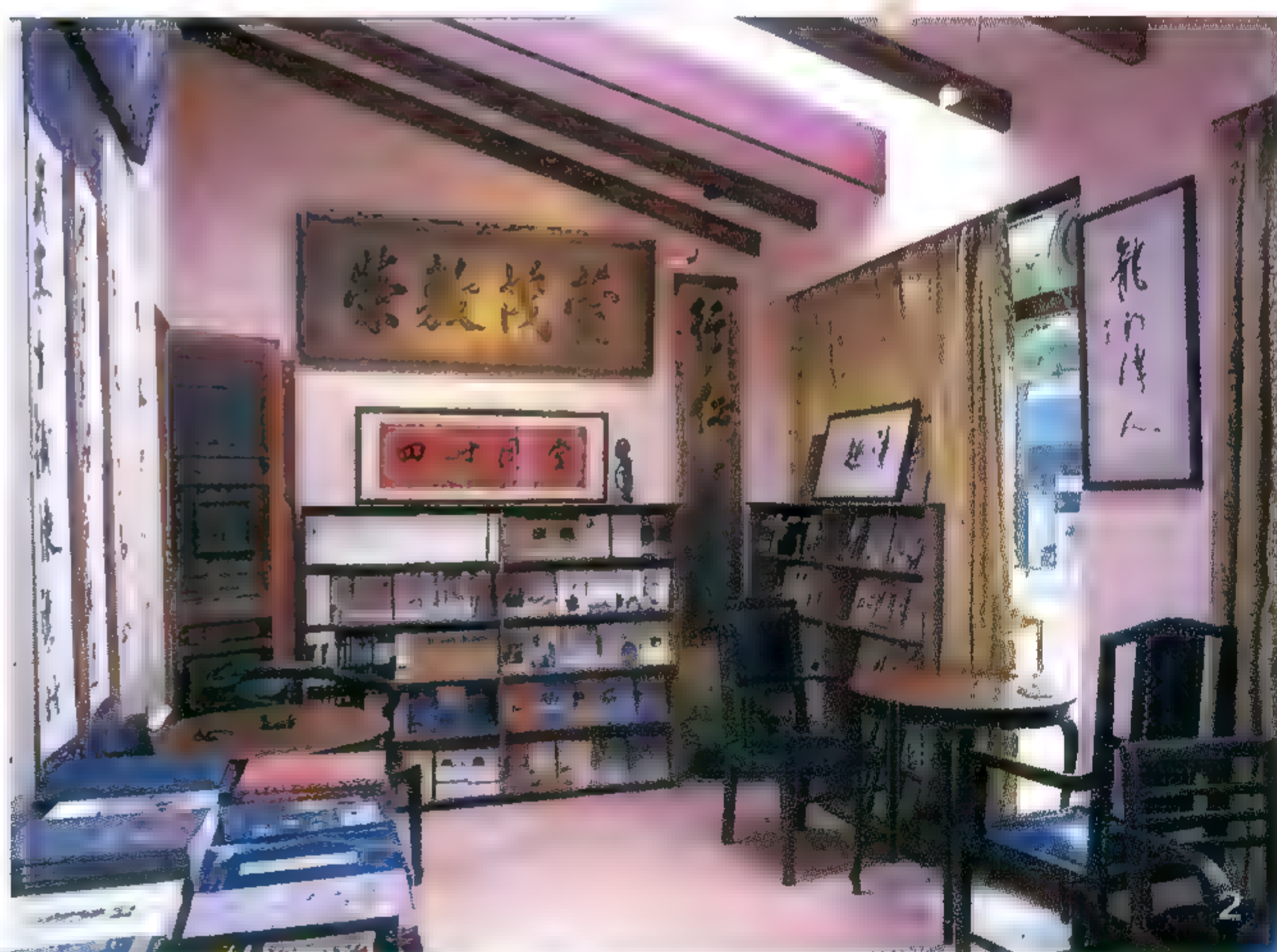
1. What great fun to slid down the track!
2. Southerners look clumsy in the snow.
3. Mount Emei in winter resembles scenes of northern China.



New Literary Delights

Hanyuan Bookshop in Shanghai

Photos by Er Dongqiang
Article by Su Si



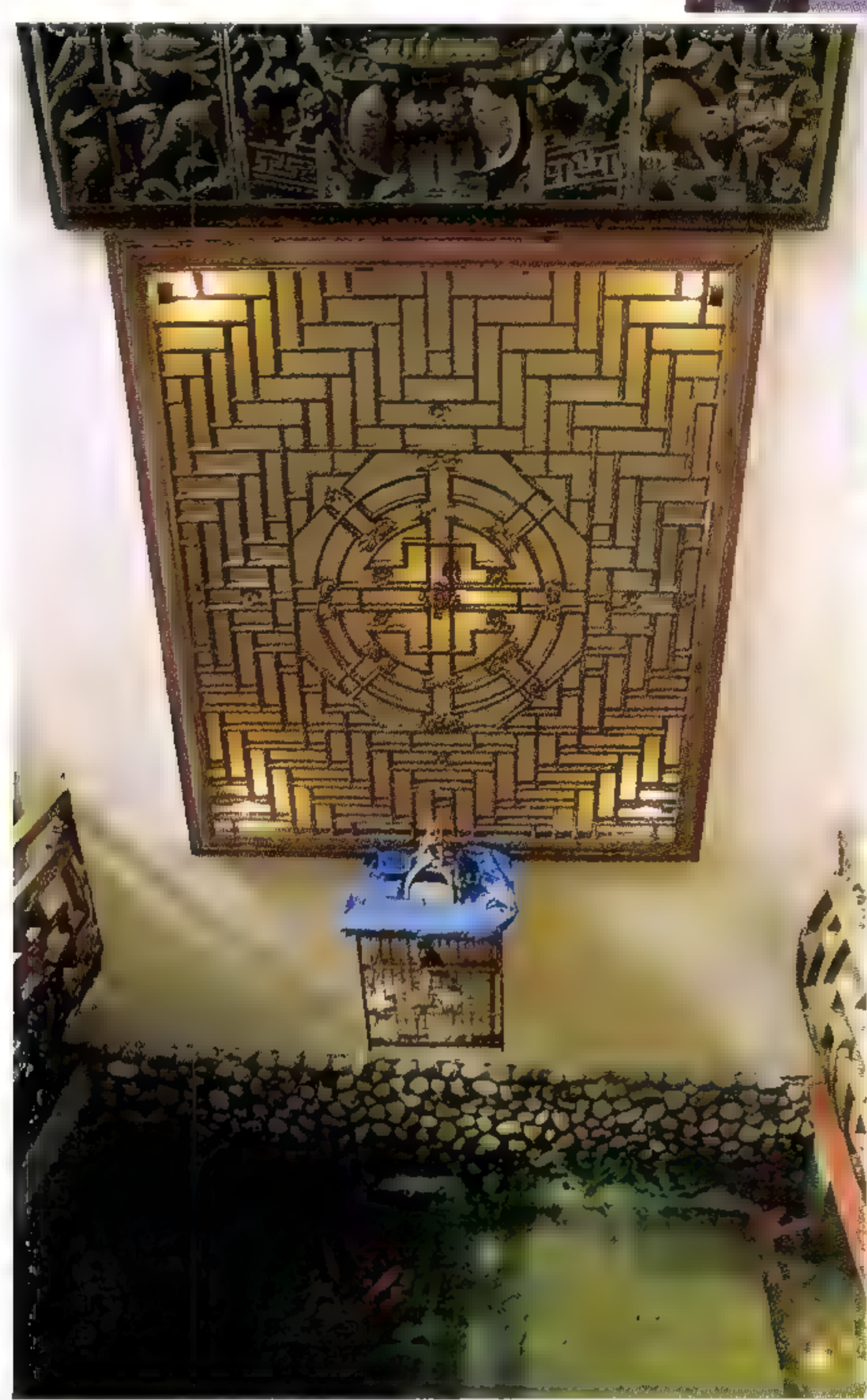
The Hanyuan Bookshop in Shanghai has been favoured by people of the cultural circles because of its high-grade literary taste and yet strong local flavour. After a recent renovation, its business area has been doubled. Now, more elegant and comfortable, it has become a most agreeable place for friends to meet and read.

One evening, as I turned the corner from Shaanxi Road to Shaoxing Road, I immediately saw the bookshop building standing there like a crystal palace. Soft orange lights penetrated from the French windows and cast shadows onto the street. Under the lights, readers were sitting in pairs like the pictures on movie posters.

Hanyuan has such a distinct Shanghai flavour that no other bookshop can imitate it. With a rich collection of books about old Shanghai, the bookstore brings people back to the past, yet at the same time it drives people forward with knowledge.

In the centre of the main room there is a very large round table which can seat 10 people. Behind it is a semi-circular bookshelf reaching right up to the ceiling. Opposite is the entrance to a rectangular resting area, which has some ancient-style chairs that are normally seen in classic towers and halls, and a "river" with fish. Like that in a Chinese garden, this tiny area evokes images of a poetic scene entitled "winding path leading to a secluded place".

Hanyuan is not just a bookstore; it often holds exhibitions. In October and November of 1999, it held an exhibition of oil paintings by Li Jian, a journalist and painter from Shanghai. Recently another exhibition has



opened to display wedding photos taken in old Shanghai.

The Shanghai flavour is what makes this bookshop truly unique. However, beside the large quantities of books about Shanghai, it also sells books of other varieties. Even if you do not want to buy a book, it is still an attractive place to visit. There you may drink a cup of coffee, look at the antiques on display, and enjoy its Shanghai-flavour cultural taste.



1. Hanyuan Bookstore, an enjoyable place for reading
2. The classic-style interior decoration of the bookstore
3. The horizontal board is from the reign of Emperor Guangxu in the Qing Dynasty
4. The rest area, though small, is elegantly decorated like a classical Chinese garden.

New Prospective Travel in the New Century

(A discussion among readers, journalists, travellers and administrators)

A More Leisurely Style of Travel

by reader He Guoxiong

My generation is fortunate to celebrate millennium and enter a new century. Since the 1970s, every year I travelled to distant places, but most trips were quick and superficial visits — the typical Hong Kong style. Now retired with plenty of time, I feel more interested in making independent trips across China.

Tourism in China started about 20 years ago, yet independent travel is still difficult. The biggest problem is transportation. In remote areas, buses are few and usually late.

Some historical sites have been destroyed or are in disrepair, and they are not easy to locate either.

Sometimes you finally arrive at the right place after overcoming difficulties, only to find that it is occupied by some institution which does not allow you to enter. Last year I experienced this unpleasant situation when I went to visit Wangchuan Villa, the

residence of the great Tang-dynasty poet Wang Wei, in Lantian County of Shaanxi Province.

As a reader of *China Tourism* since its founding, I would like to thank the magazine for enriching my cultural life. The improvement I would like to suggest is that you have more articles written by local people. Authors

living on the mainland of China, in general, have a richer knowledge of the literature, history and philosophy than do Hong Kong authors, and their articles usually contain witticisms and wonderful phrases.

Maintain the Original Lifestyle

by journalist Suolang Zhaxi

People often have regrets after visiting a place. For example, you may see brand new buildings standing among wooden houses on flagstone streets, destroying the harmony of an old town.

In some remote areas where minority ethnic groups live, star-rated hotels have been built to meet the needs of tourist industry. These urban-style hotels lack the ethnic uniqueness. Along with the improving living standards and better communications, unfortunately, many of the minority people's traditional customs and costumes are fading.

For instance, the Lele cart on the Mongolian Grassland used to be a unique attraction, but now has been replaced by tractors and trucks.

In fact, most tourists are attracted by those unique ethnic features. The quandary is how to protect these features while at the same time developing local economy and improving living standards.

Tourists nowadays do not simply want to see performances staged for them, but want to see and experience the real life. In New Zealand, shearing wool, planting kiwi bushes and



sheep herding with dogs are all part of the local daily life, with or without visitors.

As the new century is dawning, we wish that more natural things can be retained and that places in China can learn the benefits of lifestyle tourism.

Hangzhou, the Paradise of Festivals

by Chen Binghu, director of Hangzhou Tourist Bureau

Hangzhou is seizing the opportunity of millennium celebrations to launch a new tourist program, Colourful Hangzhou, which offers a characteristic festival in each of the four seasons.

In spring, there will be a national orchid exhibition and spring tea festival; in summer, a lotus flower festival; in autumn, the sweet-scented osmanthus festival and West Lake international fireworks festival; in winter, the West Lake Expo. The rest of the 24 major programs will highlight the scenery, historical sites and folklore of Hangzhou, as well as its people's lifestyle. We are confident that this year-round festival atmosphere will make the city a tourist hotspot of the new century.

(Source: Jiangnan Tourist News)

Travelling 10,000 Miles : Better Than Browsing the Internet

by Liu Fengqun

There is the ancient saying that travelling 10,000 miles is better than reading 10,000 books. Today science and technology are developing rapidly, so that with the new



millennium we may change this saying into: Travelling 10,000 miles is better than browsing the Internet.

Living in this era of computer and information technology, we only need to punch a key to enter a kaleidoscopic world on the Internet, where you can easily find all kinds of information and pictures. However, all the information on the Internet comes from another person's experiences. It is different from your own unique travel experience. Different travellers have different experiences. Nothing can substitute for actual travel.

Many people like to make detailed plans

for their travel, but sometimes it may be best to put them all aside and just enjoy the world. Besides wonderful scenery, travel gives you the chance to encounter people personally and exchange views with them. You cannot do this through the Internet, which is too subjective.

We hope more people will take the ancient advice to travel 10,000 miles to enrich their personal experience of life.

Perhaps Space Travel Is Next


by traveller Chen Aihe

I love independent travel. I can arrange my own route and destination as I wish, which gives me more time to contact the local people rather than just have a quick look.

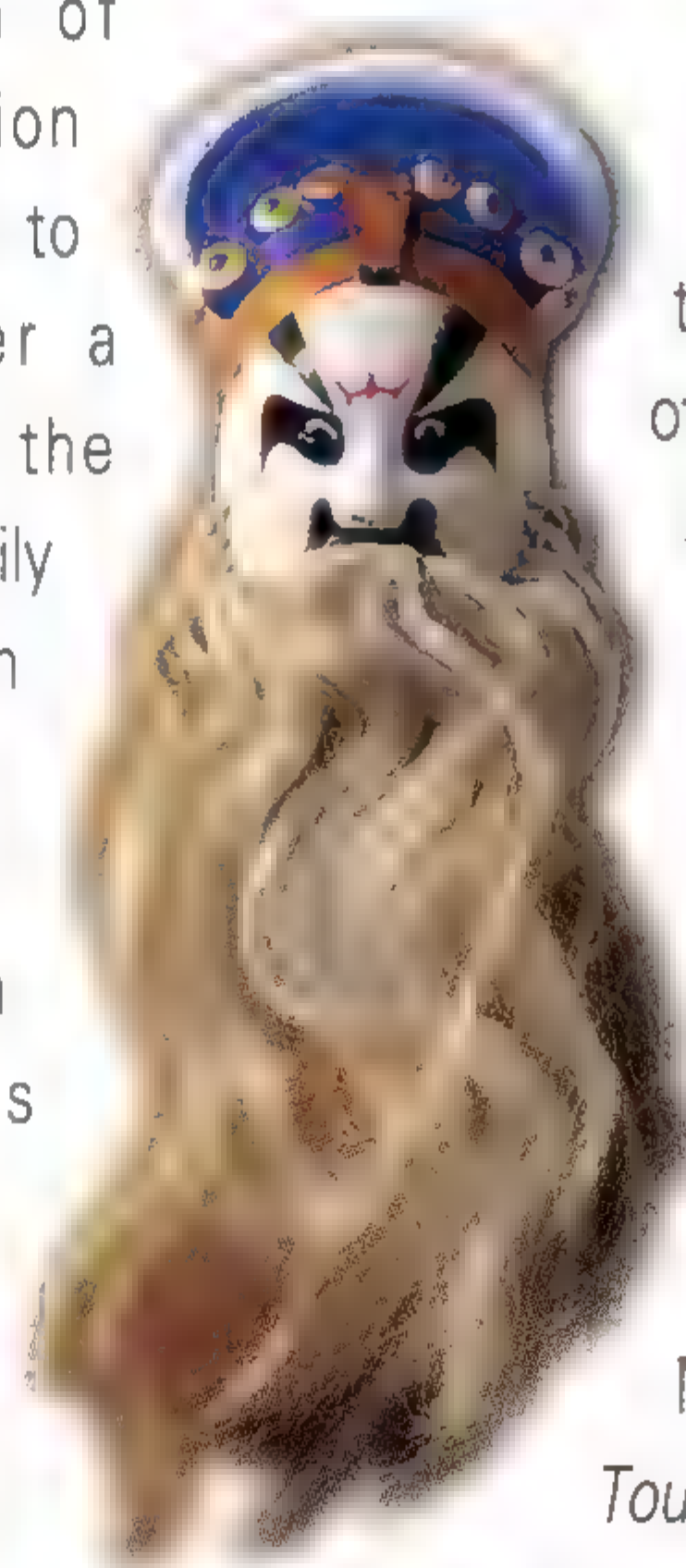
I love historical sites more than natural scenery because they stir people's hearts.

In the 21st century, we may create tourist programs for travel on the moon or other planets in space. This is not a fantasy since science and technology have been developing so fast.

In the 21st century, I hope that humans will be able to bring time-travel into being. If images do not disappear, why shouldn't it be possible to travel in a time tunnel?

Maybe then, *China Tourism* will have to add a new column for such special tours. 

Translated by M.Q.



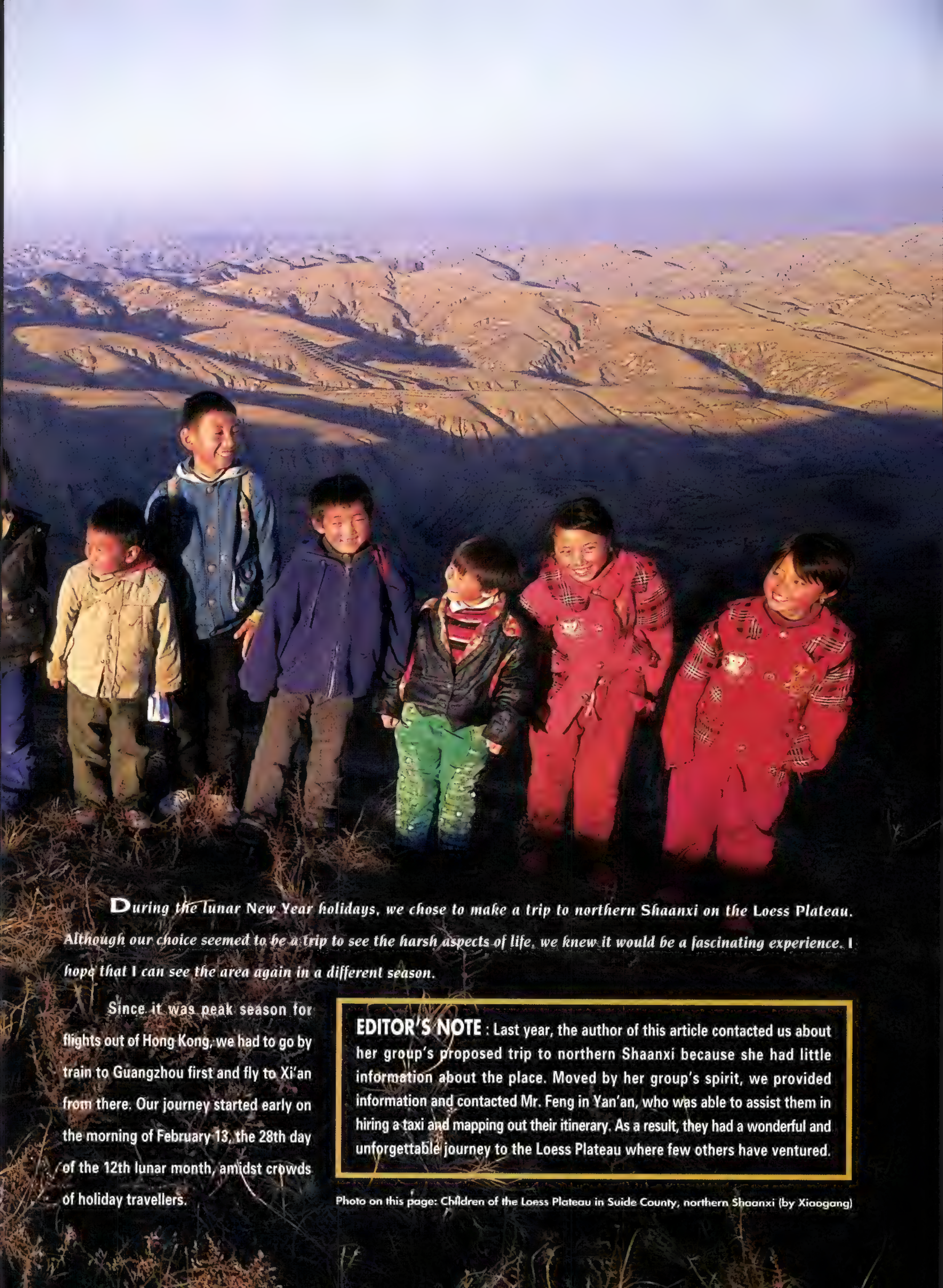
FEATURE



Blue Skies and Yellow Loess

Article by Zhou Ping

SPRING FESTIVAL IN NORTHERN SHAANXI



During the lunar New Year holidays, we chose to make a trip to northern Shaanxi on the Loess Plateau. Although our choice seemed to be a trip to see the harsh aspects of life, we knew it would be a fascinating experience. I hope that I can see the area again in a different season.

Since it was peak season for flights out of Hong Kong, we had to go by train to Guangzhou first and fly to Xi'an from there. Our journey started early on the morning of February 13, the 28th day of the 12th lunar month, amidst crowds of holiday travellers.

EDITOR'S NOTE : Last year, the author of this article contacted us about her group's proposed trip to northern Shaanxi because she had little information about the place. Moved by her group's spirit, we provided information and contacted Mr. Feng in Yan'an, who was able to assist them in hiring a taxi and mapping out their itinerary. As a result, they had a wonderful and unforgettable journey to the Loess Plateau where few others have ventured.

Photo on this page: Children of the Loess Plateau in Suide County, northern Shaanxi (by Xiaogang)

Yan'an

HOME OF THE RED ARMY



We enjoyed ourselves for a few days in Xi'an, climbed Mount Huashan, one of China's Five Sacred Mountains, and then spent the third night of the first lunar month on the overnight train from Xi'an to Yan'an. By 6 a.m., we arrived in Yan'an, the Red

Army headquarters during the War of Resistance Against Japan. At the station, all the buses were full, there were no taxis and it was bitterly cold. We waited a long time before a taxi appeared.

closed for the holidays. There were hardly any pedestrians. After settling us in a hotel,

1. It is the custom to visit relatives during the first 10 days of the lunar new year. (by Yao Zhichuan)
2. The former residence of Mao Zedong at Date Garden
3. Cave dwellings of the Yan'an University (by Gao Miaoyan)
4. Tourists like to pose in the Red Army's uniform when they visit the revolutionary base of Yan'an. (by Xiaogang)

ONLY ONE RESTAURANT OPEN

While in Xi'an, we had telephoned Mr. Feng Yingzhuang as recommended by *China Tourism*. Feng said that the New Year holidays in Yan'an are usually quiet, so we had postponed our arrival until the fourth day of the first lunar month. But the streets were still deserted and most of the shops still



Mr. Feng went to look for a restaurant that was open. Finally, he found one and the only one that was open. It was almost 9 a.m. when we had breakfast, which consisted of red-rice gruel and stir-fried shredded potato. The gruel was slightly sweet and quite good, but the potato dish was huge, with salt and prickly ash in it. Although I like potatoes, I could only eat a few mouthfuls of such a salty dish for breakfast. It was really an unfortunate waste.

THE BLUE SKY THAT I HAD MISSED FOR YEARS

We spent the day sightseeing in Yan'an. I was eager to see Yan'an, which had been the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and home to Mao Zedong's military forces from 1935 into the late 1940s. Yet, there was little to indicate it had been a revolutionary base. Still, it abounds in cultural relics. We went to the Ten-Thousand Buddha Temple on the Cool Hill where row upon row of large and small Buddhist statues stand in its grottoes.

The weather was perfect that day, not a cloud in the blue sky. I could not remember the last time I saw a sky like that. But the wind was icy cold as it was 20 degrees below zero.

A PANORAMA OF YAN'AN

It was the first time that I stepped on the yellow earth and saw the famous cave dwellings and narrow winding trails. The earth was indeed yellow, and any slight



3



Yan'an, the Red Capital

Article by Shan Xiaogang



Yan'an is the Red Capital of the Chinese revolution. Between 1937 and 1947, leaders of the Chinese revolution like Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and Liu Shaoqi had all lived in the cave dwellings there. These dwellings and their furnishings have been preserved.

Date Garden is an idyllic spot far from the city

where farmers often sell dates by the roadside. On festival days long ago, Mao Zedong often invited his neighbours to dine there. General Zhu De carried grain by horse for the local peasants and played chess with villagers near the cave dwellings.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in nearby Yangjialing, where Mao Zedong had lived for over four years, writing essays and growing vegetables to survive difficult times during the War of Resistance Against Japan. It was also where the American correspondent Anna Louise

Strong interviewed him.

Wangjiaping in the northwestern part of Yan'an was the seat of the Central Military Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC and headquarters of the Eighth Route Army.

Travel Tips: Date Garden, Yangjialing and Wangjiaping; take No.8 bus or a minibus from Great Yan'an Bridge. Rental of Red Army uniform for photos at Date Garden: 2 yuan. At Yangjialing there are Red Army souvenirs on sale. Yan'an Hotel: 156 yuan for a standard room.



movement would stir up a fine yellow dust like wheat flour into the air. Even so, against a background of blue sky, it did not feel dirty like the dust of cities. From the Cool Hill, we had a panorama of Yan'an and the surrounding plateau criss-crossed by ridges and gullies. Yan'an is a small city with only two main streets paralleling the Yanhe River and a few side streets. There are no tall buildings. The pagoda on the Pagoda Hill is the best landmark. No wonder Mr. Feng had smiled when we suggested buying a map of Yan'an.

AN EXHILARATING WALK IN THE SUNSHINE

We asked an elderly man on the roadside for directions. Though he understood me, I had trouble with his northern Shaanxi dialect and sign language was more effective. We walked down the other side of the Cool Hill towards Wangjiaping. With the blue sky above and solid yellow soil under foot, it was an exhilarating walk even though the gentle wind was cold. We saw cave homes newn all over the yellow hills. In the courtyards encircled by adobe walls were

large yellow dogs barking at us. We continued on to Wangjiaping.

1. The city of Yan'an is built in a valley. (by Yan Kang)
2. New Year Pictures and couplets are irreplaceable decorations for the New Year celebrations. (by Luo Yajun)
3. The villagers retain a primitive life style. (by Luo Yajun)
4. Young farmers are more interested in learning Western dances than folk dances. (by Luo Yajun)
5. The tomb of Hua Mulan, a legendary heroic woman general in Chinese history (by Yang Yankang)



Home of Hua Mulan

Article by Shan Xiaogang



To the southwest of Yan'an is Du Fu's Valley, through which Du Fu, the great Tang-dynasty poet, is said to have travelled and left behind many immortal poems. Huayuantou Village in this valley is home of the woman general Hua Mulan. Her tomb, called the Hua Family Mausoleum by the locals, was a huge structure regrettably destroyed during the "cultural

revolution". Her statue in battle attire, carved in green stone, stands at the centre of a new mausoleum.

Opposite the mausoleum is the Hill of Ten Thousand Flowers overgrown with wild peonies. The peonies are said to have been collected from various places by Hua Mulan during her army duty in place of her father. She planted them there after she was demobilised. There are now over 40,000 peonies of 13 varieties, mostly rare species.

Travel Tips: A special minibus goes to the Hill of Ten Thousand Flowers, 20 kilometres from the city, from Nanguan.

Hukou

THE YELLOW HEAVENLY RIVER

At 8 a.m. on February 21, we set out for Hukou. Although we drove all the way without a single stop, it took us over three hours.

A DISASTROUS WALK ON THIN ICE

From the river bank, we could see that the Yellow River was wide and smooth before it reached Hukou, but here it suddenly narrowed. In winter, without rain or snow, the waterfall had lost much of its momentum. Yet it still roared like thunder, throwing up a fine spray. The temperature had risen to 7°C that day, so the ice covering the cliff edge had melted and was slippery. As I thought of the consequences of falling over the edge, I saw our driver, Ms. Ren,

pointing at the huge rock behind me, but her words were drowned out by the waterfall. At this moment, our friend Eric emerged, drenched, from behind the rock. Thinking the river ice was quite firm, he had stepped on it and plunged into the river. Luckily, he was not near the cliff edge. We joked that he was the first man in history to swim in the Yellow River at Hukou in winter. His waterproof coat saved him from getting totally wet, but he had to try to dry his shoes and socks in the warm sunlight. Ms. Ren gathered a handful of twigs and lit a fire to keep him warm. A local old man standing nearby had quite an amused look. Later, when we crossed the bridge spanning the Yellow River between Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces and had our lunch, Eric dried his shoes by a stove.

MELTING ICE FORMS GULLY STREAMS

When I saw how dry the loess was, I thought there was a shortage of water in the area. But I was wrong. We learned that the patches of ice we had often seen on large hilly

expanses would melt in warm weather and flow into the gullies, forming small streams. Ren said this water is sweet and potable. On our way back to Yan'an, when we were taking photos of a small glacier-like frozen waterfall on a hill slope, two friendly local men with a donkey walked by. On hearing that we had never been on a donkey, they insisted that we should have photos on the donkey's back. Later, they asked if we would



like to see their village. As it was already late and we had a long trip back to Yan'an, we regretfully declined the kind invitation.

On the way back, we saw a herd of grazing cows with bells around their necks.





In the wintry dusk, the loess was dyed golden by the setting sun.

A LOCAL NEW YEAR FEAST

We had wanted to try northern Shaanxi food, but unfortunately the only restaurant open did not serve it. So Ms. Ren invited us to her home that evening to try some northern Shaanxi dishes. As there would be no hot water supply after 9 p.m. in our hotel, we rushed to take a shower before hurrying to Ren's home. When we arrived, the dining table was already laid with several meat and vegetable dishes. Ms. Ren had prepared the dishes herself that very evening. She also offered us a bottle of her own millet wine which, together with our bottle of spirits, made for a lively evening. It was a real New Year feast, thanks to Ms. Ren.

1. After slipping into the water at Hukou (by Xiao Zhidong)
2. The frozen waves of the Yellow River at Hukou (by Wang Miao)
3. Nanniwan, where the Red Army farmed to support themselves (by Zhou Ping)
4. A Hope elementary school built in the mountains (by Luo Yajun)



Hukou Waterfalls



Hukou Waterfalls is the second largest waterfall in China, behind Huangguoshu in Guizhou Province. It lies in Hukou Township, Yichuan County, Shaanxi Province, with Jixian County in Shanxi Province on the opposite bank. The Yellow

River narrows from 300 metres down to 50 metres here, and cascades spectacularly down 20 metres with thunderous sounds.

In the wettest part of summer, the waterfall widens magnificently to 100 metres, its muddy water splashing and spraying as it roars down. In the winter, icicles hang down from the waterfall, presenting a gorgeous sight. You can see the waterfall and often rainbows, from the Great Yellow River Bridge at Mengmen in Shanxi.

The best time to see Hukou Waterfall is April-May and September-November. By bus, it takes about three hours from Yan'an and four hours from Linfen in Shanxi.

Travel Tips: Admission: 20 yuan. Hukou Hotel standard room: About 200 yuan. In the area are also sections of the Qing-dynasty Great Wall, an ancient ferry, the Mengmen Mountain, and you can enjoy rafting on the Yellow River.

Ansai

RHYTHMIC MOTIONS OF THE PLATEAU

On the following day, the seventh of the new year, we headed for Ansai to see waist-drum performances. Mr. Feng explained that usually the waist-drum teams performed around the 15th day, but luck was with us. We saw several performances, two of which were outstanding.

DRUMMERS STIR UP THE DUST

After watching one performance, Ms. Ren heard that a team was performing on the top of a hill slope ahead. Hastily, we started climbing; though the slope did not look very high, it was steep, and the loess soil was loose. It was exhausting, and at half-way, our legs buckled and we gasped for breath. Eventually at the top, we caught the last and most stirring part of the performance. There were about a dozen drummers dressed in white vests and pants over red shirts. Each had a white towel on his head and a red waist sash. The small red waist drum hung from a belt over the shoulder. Each drum stick had a piece of red silk tied at one end which flew up and down as the drummers produced a strong rhythmical beat. Drums and gongs from a band accompanied them. As they danced, their forceful steps on the yellow soil sent up a cloud of pale yellow dust. Through the dust we could see the smiles on their reddened faces.

THE OLD MEN WHO WORE MAKE-UP AND DANCED

Director Yang of the local Cultural Centre told us that it was worthwhile to visit a nearby ancient temple built in the Sui Dynasty (581-618). When we got there, a team of resting drummers was surrounded by a crowd. Besides, there were also



performers of the boat and donkey dances. Soon they gave the largest and best performance we saw that day. Later, we found that the dancing "grannies", who had rouged faces, floral cotton-padded coats, long red skirts and flowers on their heads, were masquerading old men. Although they had wrinkled faces and bent backs, they danced quite nimbly. A man and woman carrying colourful umbrellas led the other performers, singing a few lines of a blessing at the front door of each house. Their words

were echoed by the team of drummers behind them. All these drummers were young men, who beat the drums energetically and danced joyously. One of them danced so spiritedly that his white head cloth fell off, much to the spectators' amusement. Thus I understood why the drumming dancers have been referred to as the symbol of the spirit of the people on the Loess Plateau.

1. The bold and romantic Waist-Drum Dance of Ansai (by Feng Yingzhuang)
2. Being a drummer (by Xiao Zhidong)



Waist-Drum Dance of Ansai



Though drums were used in China as early as 3,000 years ago, the Waist-Drum Dance developed about 2,000 years ago from the need for frontier soldiers to keep up the morale of the troops fighting at close quarters. In northern Shaanxi there are two styles: a gentle movement to varied beats of the drum, and a

vigorous and forceful militant style.

The waist-drum dances of the Ansai, Luochuan and Yichuan towns are collectively known as The Three Drum Dances of Yan'an. The best-known one is that of Ansai, which is performed during celebrations and festivals. Drummers wear red or white scarves and carry a cylindrical drum across their shoulders. They move back and forth to the beat of the drums, lively and unrestrained.

The performances of the Waist-Drum Dance of Ansai have fancy names, such as Boys Paying Homage to Guanyin and Rams Locking Horns.

Jiaxian

THE WHITE CLOUD MOUNTAIN

On the eighth day of the new year, February 22, we drove to the north in the early morning. Mr. Feng had suggested that the White Cloud Mountain in Jiaxian was a great place to take photos, and that afterwards we could stay overnight in Yulin and tour Mizhi and Suide on the way back.

A STEEP CLIMB TO THE TOP

The route to Jiaxian from Yan'an was through Suide and Mizhi along a second-grade state highway, which was under construction. Dust rolled everywhere, and the bumpy road tossed and jolted us until we were dizzy. The sky was grey at 3:30 p.m. when we finally arrived at the White Cloud Mountain. This mountain, standing on the Yellow River bank facing Shanxi Province,



was partly obscured by a pale yellow cloud of dust. Worshippers, burning incense, crowded the ancient temple on the mountain top. It was a long climb up a steep flight of stone steps to reach the top. It reminded us of the climb up Mount Huashan, where the steep slopes frighten people who are not used to mountain climbing. The temple's imposing front gate has four carved characters, meaning "the Tao follows the way of nature", by calligrapher Zhao Puchu.

We were surprised to find such a magnificent temple in a remote county town.

DRIVING IN THE DESERT AT NIGHT

After our descent, Ms. Ren asked a security guard how far it was to Yulin. The man said that it should take one and a half to two hours to get there. Thinking we would be there by 7 p.m., we cheerfully headed on our way. Shortly after leaving the county town of



Jiaxian, we entered a desert area. The dusk deepened steadily until it was totally dark. The uneven gravel road jolted our car up and down, left and right, like a small boat on a stormy sea. There were a few passing vehicles on the road. Ms. Ren asked one driver and found that we were on the right road but still quite far from Yulin. We started worrying that we might have to pass the night in the cold desert. I had noticed yesterday that the car tyres were almost totally worn out, which would make driving in the desert or on ice or snow very difficult.

HAPPY TO SEE YULIN AGAIN

While driving in the desert, very often we had to get out of the car and push it. There was no wind, but it was very cold. The narrow road sloped down to sandy shoulders on both sides. I remember clearly starting our pushing at exactly 7:59 p.m. It wasn't until 9:30 p.m. that we happily saw the lights of Yulin. As we were both hungry and cold, the roadside stall selling hot rice noodles and kebab was a welcome sight. It was almost 10:30 when we found a hotel. Our adventurous journey through the desert was an unforgettable one.

1. Farmers in northern Shaanxi live a simple self-sufficient life. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. People of Shanxi and Shaanxi, separated by the Yellow River, exchange goods on the banks of the river. (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Xianglu Temple in Jiaxian is exquisitely built on the cliffs. (by Shi Baoxiu)
4. There is a saying that the northern Shaanxi people, with long noses and narrow eyes, are descendants of the ancient Baidi tribe. (by Xiaogang)



Xintianyou (Sky Wandering Tune)



Xintianyou, or Shuntianyou as it is called in some places, is a folk tune that can be sung anytime, in any open area. It is a very simple and variable tune, which may be only two lines. Hardly any other folk tunes are as free in their form of expression as Xintianyou.

This type of folk tune, unlike other northern Shaanxi folk songs, had its origin in the herders' nomadic lifestyle. It has inherited the style of the ancient Book of Songs, and is composed impromptu to express the singer's feelings through a certain subject. There are two lines in a stanza and a single rhyme runs through the whole song, in its original language:

*"How lovely, how really lovely is my sweetheart,
The way she walks is like gliding on water."*

*"The morning-star lily blooms in the shade of a
gully. If you love me, please wait for me patiently."*

Yulin

A TOWN FIGHTING WIND AND SAND



We left the hotel in Yulin the following morning and drove out of the town to see what was there.

A GREAT WALL PASS

We headed for Zhenbei (Northern Pacifying) Terrace to the north of the town along a tree-lined road. Only occasionally did we see a small patch of sand dunes. The terrace was easy to find; we could see it from a long distance away. A stone tablet outside the gate says that this terrace, which is perfectly preserved, was one of the three great passes of the Great Wall, together with

Shanhaiguan and Jiayuguan. Morning clouds veiled the sun. The yellow colour of the soil was broken by a few rows of houses, trees with bare branches and a clear winding river. We went in at 9 a.m. when the gate opened, and the sun emerged from the clouds, gilding everything with its golden rays. From the terrace, we could see the half-eroded Ming-dynasty Great

Wall not far away. It gave a melancholy touch to the silent plain.

THE INSPIRING INSCRIPTIONS

We moved on to the Hongshi (Red Stone) Gorge not far away. The frozen river in the gorge was melting, revealing clear water and a swift current. The gorge came into existence as a result of erosion by flood water. We could clearly see marks of erosion in the rocky caves on the eastern bank, a sign that the water level was far higher than it is now. In contrast, the western cliff face is covered with inscriptions. The largest characters measure a good four metres high. Among the inscriptions are the following: "Chinese and foreigners are one and the

same", "a natural barrier between China and foreign lands", and "eternal rivers and mountains". Most are related to the state affairs and frontier defence. The officials long ago stationed at this distant frontier must have experienced stirring emotions to have made such inscriptions.

The ice near the bank was covered with sand blown by the wind and looked much like moistened soil. I stepped on it and almost fell into the river.

A VIBRANT PARADE

Back in town, we came across a large parade starting out. As my friends took photos, someone in the parade said, "There are reporters taking pictures of us." We kept our laughter about that to ourselves. A large

1. The ancient Great Wall in Yulin had been moved several times because of the threatening desert before it was finally built at the current position. (by Xiaogang)
2. Wuding River, a tributary of the Yellow River, on the Loess Plateau (by Wang Miao)
3. An ancient temple found in the Red Stone Gorge (by Huang Yuanfang)
4. A section of the Ming-dynasty Great Wall in northern Shaanxi (by Xiaogang)
5. Red Stone Gorge (by Wang Miao)



Red Stone Gorge



The Hongshi (Red Stone) Gorge in northern Shaanxi offers both natural scenery and cultural relics. The clear and rapid Yuxi River flows through this 350-metre-long gorge lined with trees on both sides.

The Song-dynasty Xionshan Temple sits on tall cliffs of red and white rocks on the eastern side. Its halls and shrines are caves hewn in the cliff face.

Passing the Gate to Heaven you can reach the pavilion on the cliff top; by crawling through the Gate to Earth you can see the stone carvings inside the caves. The carved inscriptions on the western side of the gorge were done by officials and scholars stationed at Yulin during the various dynasties. Their height ranges from a few centimetres to four metres tall.

Travel Tips: Opening time: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission: 4 yuan. Transport: Special minibuses and tricycles go to the gorge, three kilometres north of Yulin. It takes about 40 minutes to tour the site.



banner at the beginning announced: Yangge Troupe of the Yulin Traffic and Transport Departments. Marching at the head were a team carrying flags and a festooned vehicle. The dancers, with rouged faces, were all dressed as traffic police, each carrying a small waist-drum across the shoulder. Behind them, a formation of primary school pupils and their teachers gave a perfect performance as

they moved forward and danced. They were followed by another group of men and women, even more heavily made-up with rouge and lipstick, doing the Yangge dance. They were indeed a startling sight to behold.

LOOKING FOR THE DESERT

Since we had seen just a few patches of sand dunes, we decided to look for the real

desert. And we really were "looking" for it. After many years of tree planting against desertification, there were hardly any large expanses of desert left near Yulin. We drove around a long time outside of the town but found only some small sand dunes. Lost on the way back, we sometimes had to thread through narrow alleys only as wide as our car. Luckily the car escaped unscathed.

Zhenbei Terrace



The Zhenbei (North Pacifying) Terrace was one of the nine frontier military strongholds in ancient China. The terrace was a Ming-dynasty observation post of the Great Wall defence works, guarding the strategic north-south passage. The tall and imposing square structure consists of four tiers, which become smaller as height increases. Its top offers a view of the crumbling

sections of the Great Wall and the yellow sand dunes in the north. The terrace has now been restored.

Travel Tips: Admission: 2 yuan. Time required: 30 minutes. Transport: Zhenbei Terrace sits on top of the Red Hill, five kilometres north of the town of Yulin, and can be reached by taking special buses or long-distance buses to Daliuta or Shenmu, getting off at Taice stop.



Shenmu and Fugu

REMOTE FRONTIER GUARDED
BY THE YANGS



Driving eastward from Yulin, we saw many sandy hills with round tops, seemingly all cast with the same mould, on one side of the highway. There were rows and rows of them, extending into the horizon.

A WORLD OF TWO COLOURS

The sand on the other side was conquered by low-lying shrubs, grass and

trees planted in recent years. The dilapidated sections of the Ming-dynasty Great Wall and prominent beacon towers invoked images of a remote frontier long ago.

The hills, sand, withered grass, bare trees and the rammed-earth Great Wall were all yellow in colour, standing vibrantly against the clear, deep blue sky. The world here seemed to appear only in these two primary colours. Sitting there, my mind seemed purified of the distant and busy city I had left 10 days ago.

On our way we passed a broad valley with round sand hills on both sides. The valley's zigzagging river was wide but shallow, and disappeared into the winter

mist. Our driver said it had the dismal name of Tail-less River, because it flows out of the desert and often dries up in the dry season.

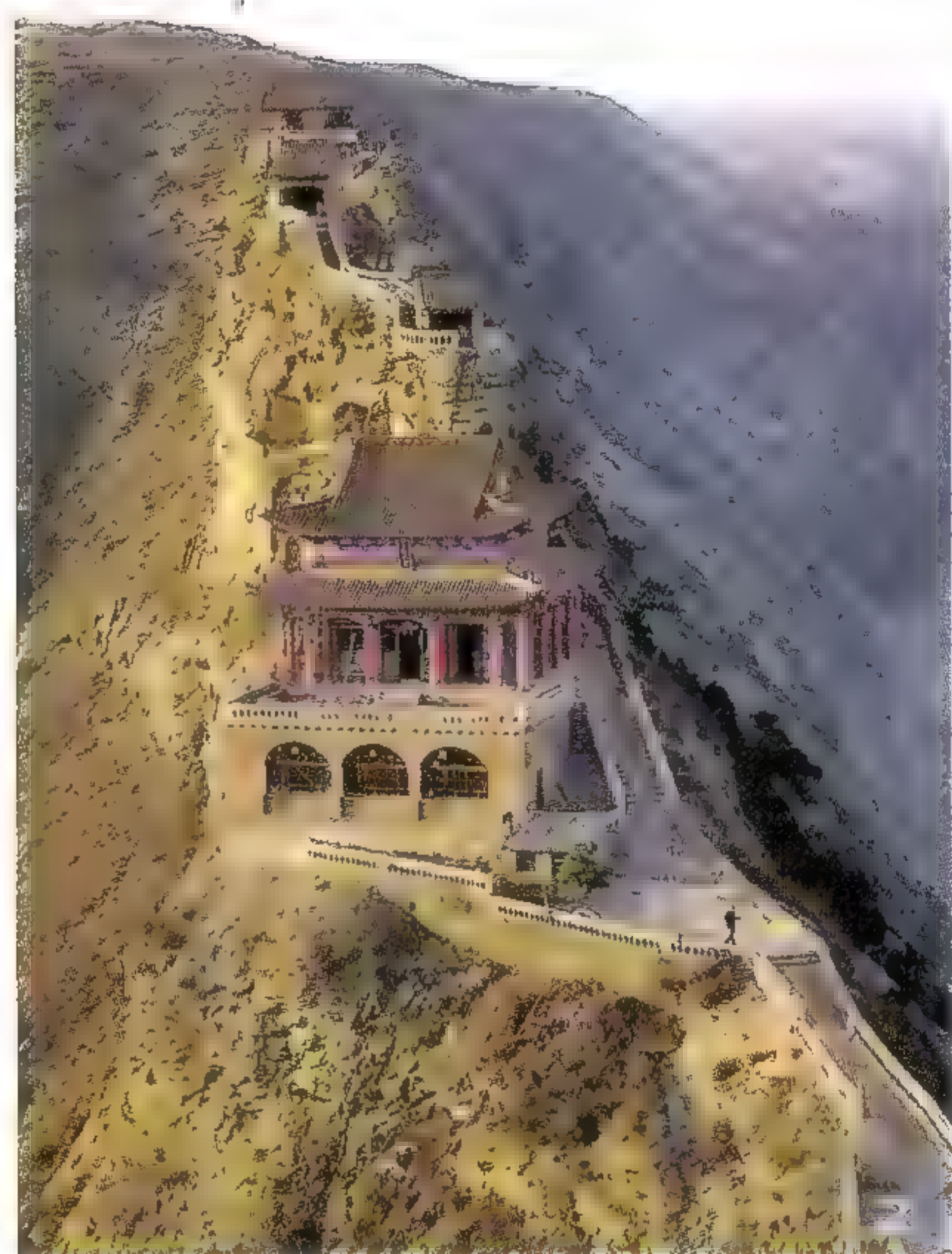
NARROW RIDGE COVERED IN TEMPLES

We drove through a breach in the Great Wall, and the terrain on that side gradually flattened out. Suddenly Erlang Mountain rose in front of us, strangely piercing the sky like a row of wolf's teeth. From its eastern side, it resembles the back of a bony donkey. Though the mountain extends for a whole kilometre, its ridge is only 10 metres wide. Erlang's slender shape comes from being squeezed by rivers on each side and eroded by flood waters over thousands of years.

Following a narrow flight of stone steps, we climbed to the top and found, to our surprise, numerous temples and shrines have been built there. The larger ones are the size of ordinary houses and the small ones like a hen-house or even pigeon cage. Whether big or small, each has idols enshrined in it. Along the one-kilometre ridge, there are over 100 temples and shrines with Buddhist, Taoist or other gods in them. The main god is the Taoist god Erlang, or Yang Jin, for whom the mountain is named.

THE YANG FAMILY TOWN

The Kaige (Triumphal Songs) Tower is the only historical site that still stands in the town of Shenmu. A few beacon towers outside the town have been restored recently. On the road from Shenmu to Fugu is the Yang Family Town, which the famous



Seven-Star Temple:
Wedding Site of Yang
Jiye and She Saihua



There is an ancient fortress on a ridge by the road from Shenmu to Fugu. Magpies now nest in the trees growing among the



general Yang Jiye of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) had lived in and defended. The highway from Shenmu to Fugu winds through river valleys to the bank of the Yellow River. Facing Fugu across the river is the county town of Baode in Shanxi Province, which can be reached by a highway bridge. There were ice floes in the river,

which cracked and crashed against one another, producing loud echoes all along the border river.

From here it is possible to take a long-distance bus northward to Jungar Banner in Inner Mongolia, past the tomb of Genghis Khan in Dongsheng, and head for Baotou or Hohhot, the capital city.

crumbling walls. This is the Gushan (Solitary Hill) Fortress, an important military establishment of frontier defence during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Further into the wilderness, about one kilometre from the fort's north gate, is an even older structure called the Qixing (Seven-Star) Temple. The local people call it "Beamless Hall" because the whole structure is built without a single piece of timber. The eight-sided brick walls arch gradually and join together to form a dome, somewhat like a Mongolian yurt.

There are no written records about the temple's construction. It is believed to have existed even during the Northern Song period. In the classic opera Shitang Pass, the famous Song-dynasty general Yang Jiye met She Saihua on the battlefield while fighting the Liao army. They fell in love and were married at the Seven-Star Temple.

1. Temples built on the narrow top of Erlang Mountain are all small. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. The one-kilometre-long ridge of Erlang Mountain is covered by a series of temples. (by Xiaogang)
3. Qixing Temple, where the legendary general Yang Jiye married She Saihua following a battle against the invading Liao army (by Shi Baoxiu)
4. The Yellow River in winter (by Shi Baoxiu)
5. Ruins of the Gushan Fortress in Fugu (by Shi Baoxiu)



Suide and Mizhi

BIRTHPLACES OF HANDSOME MEN AND PRETTY WOMEN

Leaving Yulin, we travelled south to Mizhi and reached the county town late in the afternoon. As there was still daylight, we went to see the temporary palace of Li Zicheng, leader of the farmers' uprising who toppled the Ming Dynasty. On display inside were stone tablets and carvings and many other relics from the days of Li Zicheng and even earlier. Although the palace was very old, we still could admire its imposing architectural style.

THE BEAUTY OF MIZHI

There is a saying, "Mizhi's women and Suide's men," which means that men from Suide are as handsome and strong as Lü Bu and Han Shizhong, two brave generals from Suide in history, and that women from Mizhi are as pretty as Diao Zhan, a famous beauty in history.

The Loess Plateau of the Mizhi and Suide area is also typical in topography. One can hire a taxi to tour the loess slopes. The topography changes with the elevation. There are places where the loess cliffs are cut as neatly as pieces of cakes, and areas where the loess is intersected by gullies like a chicken's claw. On the top of the loess hills are tidily cultivated fields like upturned cauldrons. Scattered on the yellow soil are

flocks of black and white sheep. There are newly built cave homes at the bends and in the gullies. Although the date trees are now bare of leaves, there are dried red dates almost in every family's courtyard.

A STRANGE RIVER NAME

Since Suide is close to Mizhi, Ms. Ren suggested that we stay at Suide for the night to save time. So, we drove to Suide and stayed in a cave hotel after supper.

The following morning, we had breakfast in the hotel. Although there were only rice gruel, steamed bread and pickles, we ate with relish. It was probably because the steamed bread was better made in the north.

After setting out, we stopped for a moment by the Wuding (Unstable) River. Even the local people were not clear as to the origin of this strange name. It is probably that it constantly changed its course. There were ice floes in the river. We tested the thin ice near the bank.

We were still a long way from Yan'an. Before we drove onto the highway, we made a detour to Zichang to avoid the two-hour drive along a bumpy road. In Zichang, we went to see the Memorial Park of Xie Zichang, one of the founders of the northern Shaanxi revolutionary base who died a martyr

in 1935. There are inscriptions by Mao Zedong and others carved on stone tablets. It was already past 3 p.m. when we returned to Yan'an for a late lunch.

FAREWELL TO OUR FRIENDS

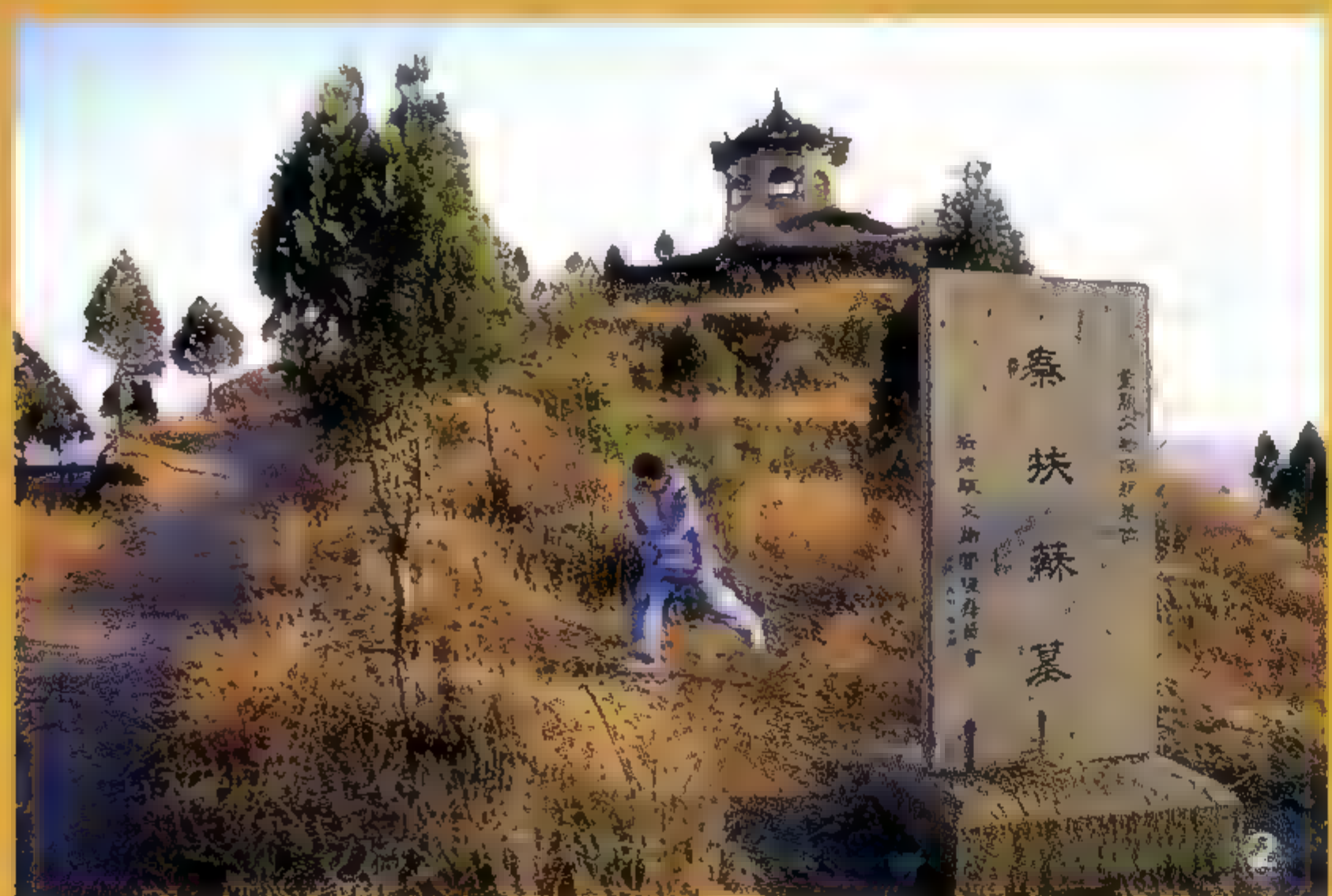
Happy and light-hearted, we had a late dinner together with Mr. Feng and the others that evening to thank them for all the arrangements they had made.

On the morning of the 25th, we travelled south to the Mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor. The minibus started at about 9 a.m. and should have arrived there at about 1 p.m. But we did not reach there until past 3 p.m. after a ride of six hours in the crowded minibus. It was a hard journey.

The tomb is a place of worshipping their legendary ancestor for all Chinese. There are tall ancient cypresses at the mausoleum. They are so tall that people standing in front of them are dwarfed. People say that the cypresses are thousands of years old.



1. The large sweet dates produced near the Yellow River are a special major produce of northern Shaanxi. (by Baoxiu)
2. The tomb of Fusu, the eldest son of Emperor Qin Shihuang (by Xiaogang)
3. The temporary palace of Li Zicheng
4. The typical image of the northern Shaanxi herdsman (by Xiaogang)



Tombs of Fusu and Meng Kuo

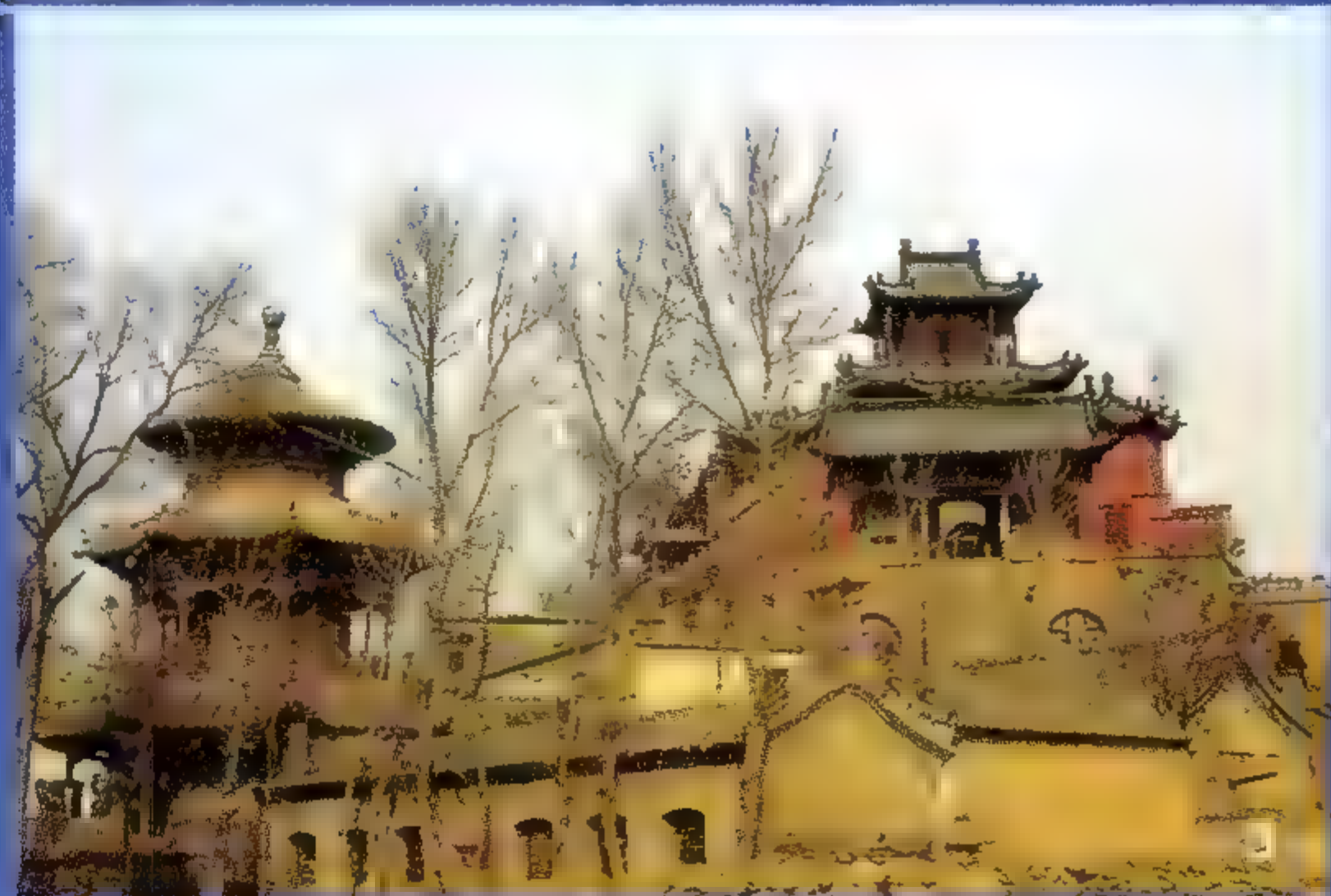


Fusu was the eldest son of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.). Disagreeing with his father's harsh policies, he was sent to the Suide area to watch General Meng Kuo's activities.

Meng Kuo was a famous general who had performed outstanding service for the First Emperor in repulsing the invading forces of the tribes in the north, fighting against the Huns and building sections of the Great Wall. In 210 B.C., he and Fusu were ordered to commit suicide together by Li Si, Zhao Gao and others in the name of the First Emperor.

Fusu's tomb is on the top of a small hill inside the county town of Suide and can be reached by walk.

Meng Kuo's tomb is about half a kilometre southwest of Suide and can be reached on foot or by a motor tricycle.



Temporary Palace of Li Zicheng

Li Zicheng, a native of Mizhi, was the leader of a peasant army who overthrew the Ming Dynasty. The temporary palace was built for his home visit after he had set up the Dashun regime in Xi'an.

The compound was built on the slope of a strategic mountain. The buildings are unconventional in style. Structures such as the Music Hall, Plum Flower Pavilion, Sage-Extolling Tower, Second Heavenly Gate and Jade Emperor's Hall are arranged neatly along a single axis reaching the summit of the mountain. Standing at the highest point are the imposing Auspicious Hall and Beiding Hall. The palace is a fairly well-known architectural complex in northern Shaanxi.

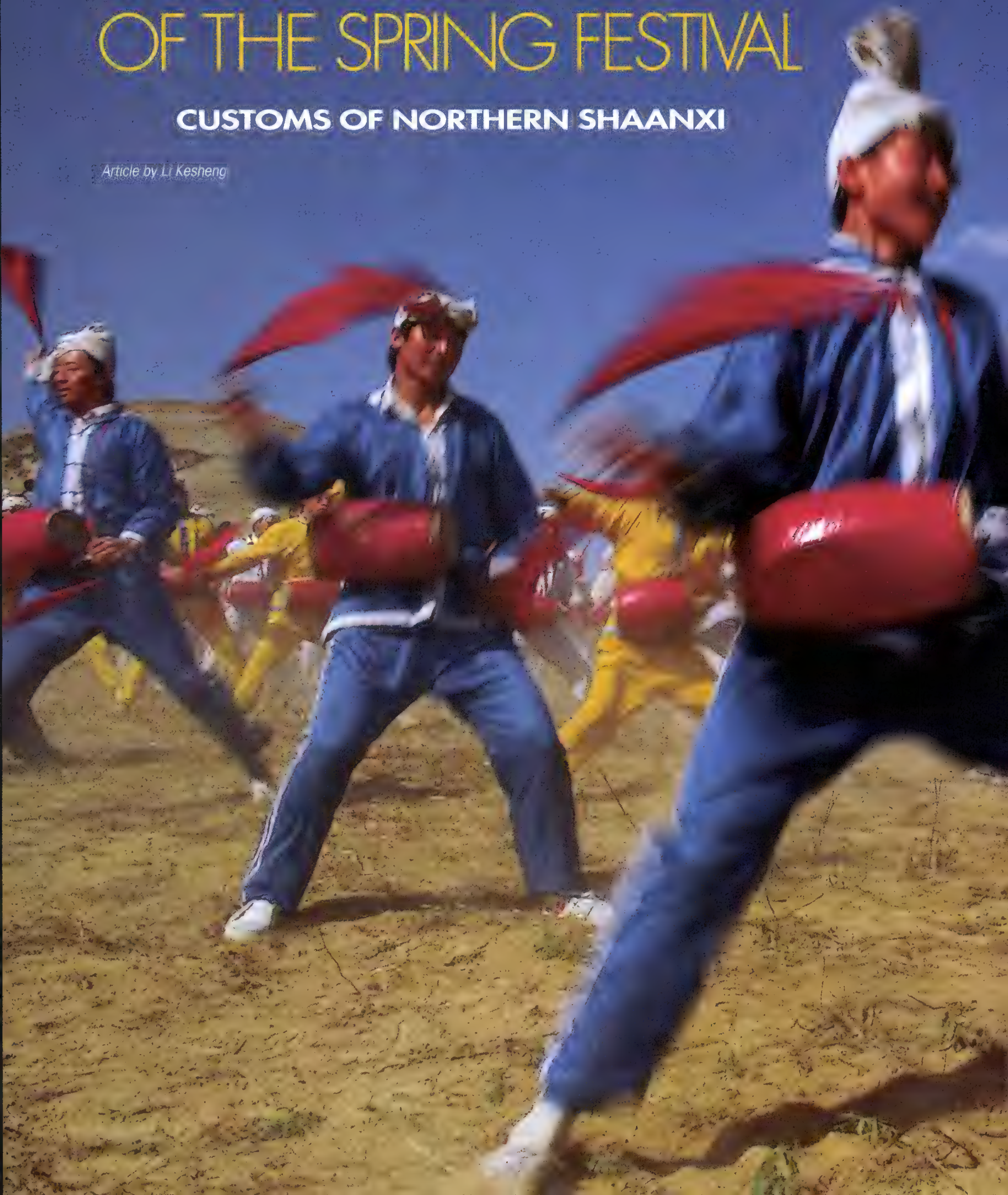
The palace is on Mt. Piantong (Called Dragon Mountain) in the north of Shaanxi, about 100 km from Xi'an. It was built in 1644 and destroyed by the Manchus in 1645.



NOISY CELEBRATIONS OF THE SPRING FESTIVAL

CUSTOMS OF NORTHERN SHAANXI

Article by Li Kesheng



Between the seventh and 15th days of the first lunar month is the time for rural spring celebrations. In northern Shaanxi, parades and jubilant celebrations are organised to welcome the arrival of spring and pray for good fortune and a rich harvest in the coming year.

FESTIVITIES IN SUIDE

When we arrived in Suide on the sixth day of the first lunar month, a festival parade was at the hotel extending New Year greetings to the guests. The huge parade with drums and gongs beating, suona horns playing and dancers performing was like a swimming dragon. Young men and women, dressed in bright red and green, sang as they twisted their bodies in a dance. There were also performers of the Land-Boar Dance and men taking women's roles in "The Old Granny Sending Off the Daughter". Now and then, as the men mimicked the ladies' gestures such as covering their mouths with handkerchiefs and tidying their hair, they aroused roars of laughter.

At the climax of the performances, many spectators joined the performers after some hasty make-up, and danced like city disco dancers.





In Xuejiamao on the eighth day, the performance ground was packed with villagers. Although it was cold, the performers were covered with perspiration while dancing.

Behind the "stage" in the courtyard, the girls and young men got ready to perform. The girls' faces were heavily rouged and even the men put on red lipstick. The elderly sat around relaxing and giving instructions.

HIRED HORNS FOR WEDDING

The seat of Jiaxian County is a historic and cultural town. It is famous because of the Taoist land Mount Baiyun (White Cloud) and the Xianglu (Incense Burner) Temple exquisitely built on top of the mountain.

The town's streets are paved with flagstone, giving the small town a classical touch.

The most interesting festival parades were those organised by children, who dressed in colourful clothes and carried parasols,

banners, large and small drums, and waist drums. As they paraded from house to house, giving performances and offering good wishes, they were greeted with big smiles.

We came across a wedding procession in the village headed by suona horn players. For most celebrations, suona horn players are indispensable in the villages and must be hired in advance. The number of players depends on the family's wealth. The wedding players, their cheeks puffed, eyes closed and fingers busy, played a pleasant tune that floated off into the distance.

TURNING THE NINE BENDS

The town of Shenmu, or Holy Wood, acquired its name during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) when there were three "holy" pines in town.

The local people follow unique customs in New Year celebrations, including the Turning the Nine Bends and Lighting the Fiery Pagoda. As the rural spring celebrations climax around the Lantern Festival on the 15th of the first lunar month, the young people also have opportunities to choose their partners.

South of the town, a structure called the Nine Bends had been set up with 1,000 lanterns arranged in nine circles of three inner, middle and outer rings, for people to walk through. This was originated from a Taoist musical ceremony. When the Taoist musicians played, they usually played nine



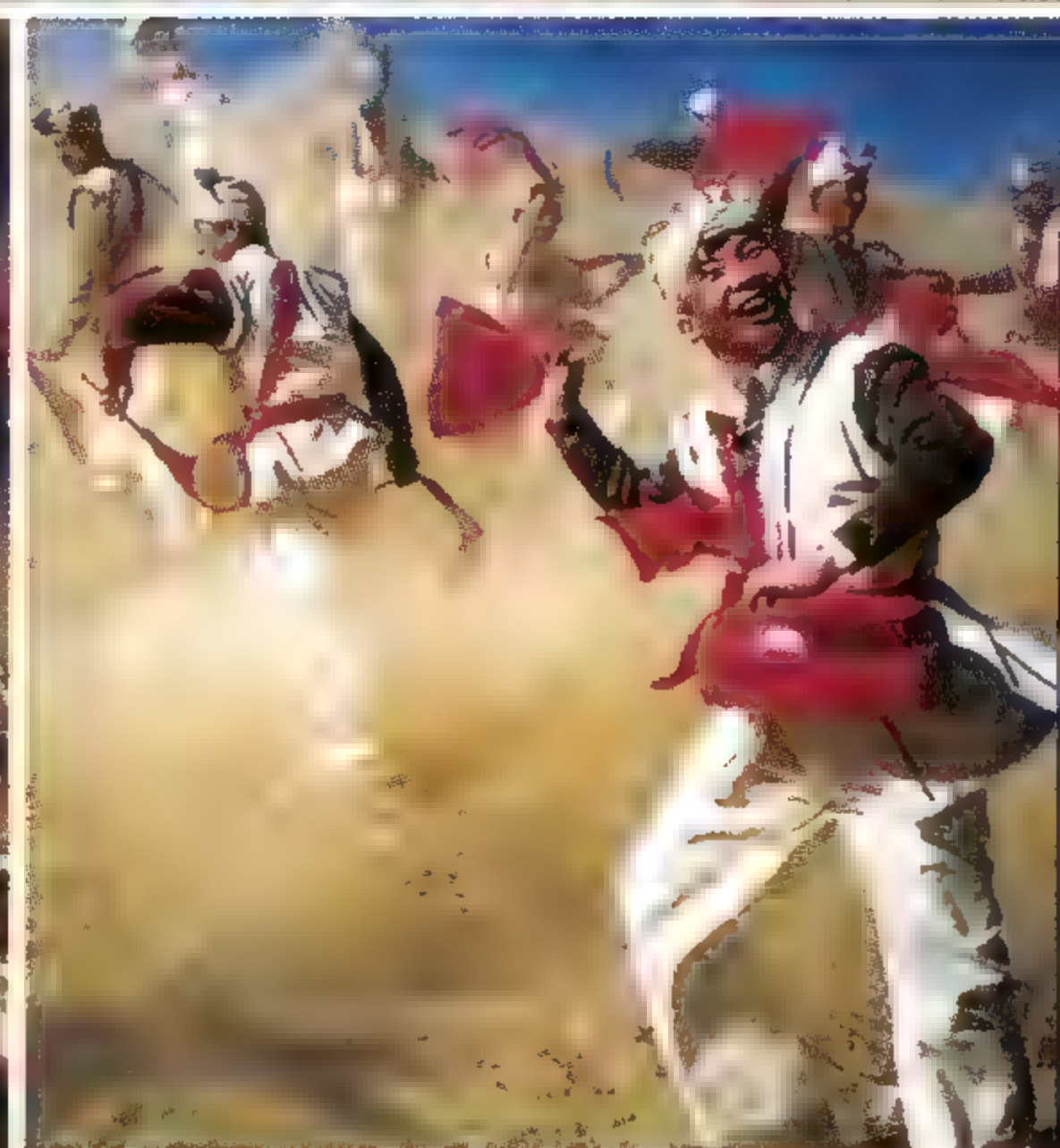
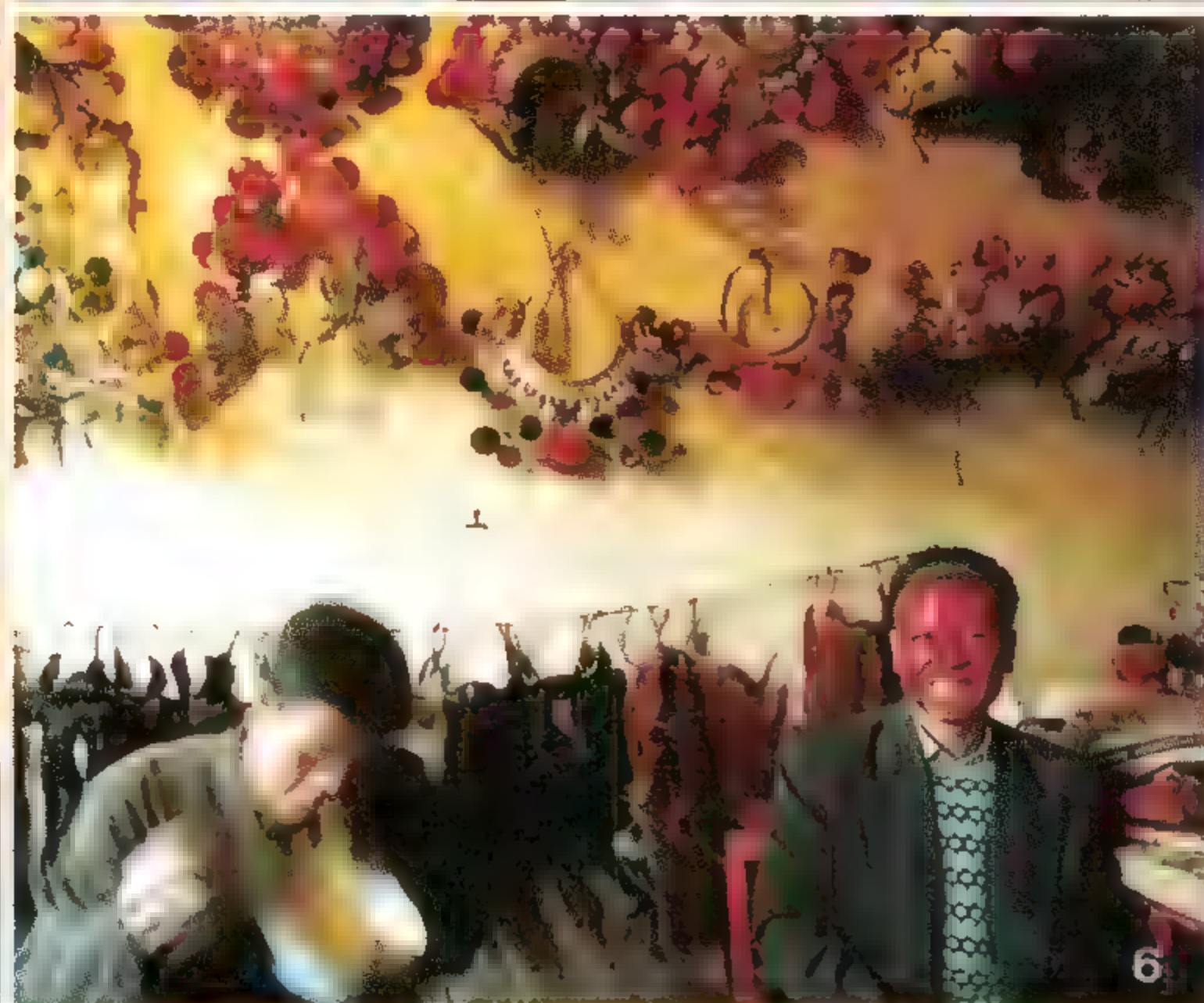
pieces in one evening; after each piece, they would walk a circle around the site. At the entrance were the memorial tablets for the legendary Three Kings and Five Emperors and fiery pagodas.

The burning fiery pagoda, built with large lumps of coal in the shape of a god, is found only in Shenmu and Fugu. This traditional custom is recorded in the Qing-dynasty *Annals of Shenmu County*. It is probably because Shenmu has been a fine-quality coal producer since ancient times.

As the coal pagodas, two to four metres high, were kindled, flames rose and turned the night red and bright. The performers vivaciously danced the Yangge Dance around it. Girls stood on one side while young men looked through the bright flames in search of the ones they loved.



1. Home-made fireworks (by Huang Fu)
2. A fiery coal pagoda in the shape of a deity
3. Led by the umbrella carrier, a Waist-Drum team tours a village. (by Huang Yuanfang)
4. "Old Grandpa Carrying Old Grandma" (by Huang Fu)
5. The Tiger-Head Drum Team performing in Yan'an (by Yang Yankang)
6. Festival performers began their make-up in the early morning. (by Yao Zhichuan)
7. The Waist-Drum dancers of Ansai regularly entertain tourists. (by Gao Miaoyan)
8. The Yulin Waist-Drum dancers have kept a simple traditional style. (by Luo Yajun)
9. Long horns accompany the Waist-Drum Dance performance. (by Du Baotong)
10. Decorations on a household door for both the New Year celebration and a wedding (by Huang Hou)
11. The Jumping Drum Dance of Luochuan requires training and skill. (by Feng Yingzhuang)



THE OX TEMPLE FAIR IN YULIN

Photos by Yang Yankang Article by Qin Han

A native of Guizhou Province in Southwest China, where clear waterfalls and roaring rivers abound, I have spent five or six lunar New Year holidays with the folk people in northern Shaanxi on the cold Loess Plateau. When my mother complained, I could not explain because even I did not know what made me fall in love with the yellow earth and its people.

THE MOST LIVELY NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

It seems to me that northern Shaanxi's New Year celebrations are the most lively ones in the whole country. There are programmes such as the Yangge and Waist-Drum dances, suona horn playing, Turning Nine Bends, Lighting the Fiery Pagoda and many others. The local people work hard year-round and spend the slack season of the first lunar month eating and drinking and partying. The celebrations begin with an exchange of greetings on the second day, worshipping the ancestors and the sky and the earth on the third day, and offering

sacrifices to the Ox King at the temple fair and praying for a bumper harvest, fat cattle and sheep, happiness and peace for the old and young in the new year on the eighth day. The noisy celebrations go on to the 16th day.

MANY COLOURFUL OFFERINGS

Yuhe Township is unusual in that it is located at the confluence of the Wuding (Unstable) River and its tributary, the Yufu River, and it has smooth terrain and plentiful water for rice-planting. Rarely are such places found in northern Shaanxi, especially in this dry and windy Yulin area. For this reason, the Ox King Temple fair held in the relatively well-off Yuhe is much larger in scale and momentum. The fair is not held at a fixed place but in every one of the dozen or so villages in turn.

The people of the host village started putting up tents on the slope outside the village after the fifth day. On the eighth day, the opening day of the fair, neighbouring villagers gathered at the tents, carrying all kinds of colourfully wrapped offerings,



mainly food, for the Ox King. They placed them on the slope, covering about 300 square metres. After the ceremony of making three kow-tows and nine bows, the villagers were led by the master of the ceremony down to the Ox King Temple in a parade. Several hundred people carrying offerings on their heads, heralded by an honour guard armed with swords, guns,



1. The Ox King is followed by an honour guard armed with many kinds of weapons.
2. A sincere prayer given on the plateau
3. Offering carefully prepared food for the Ox King to pray for a year of favourable weather
4. The 500-metre-long procession marching to the Ox King Temple
5. An elder with prestige presiding over the ceremony

halberds and spiked clubs, presented an impressive sight as they marched forward in quick steps. The troupe was joined continuously by people from neighbouring villages and followed Waist-Drum dancers and suona horn players. Extending over 500 metres, they looked like ancient soldiers marching towards the battlefields.



A TOUCH BRINGS LUCK

When they reached the Ox King Temple, a hoisted sedan-chair suddenly spurted out from nowhere. As it dashed around, the people did not try to evade it but touched it with their

hands or heads, believing this would bring them good luck and unexpected wealth. Behind the curtain was a plump middle-aged man masquerading as the Ox King.

At dusk, the Turning the Nine Bends performance and the Lighting of the Fiery

Pagoda began on the river bank, and went on until late in the night. Why is the Ox King offered sacrifices? It is likely revered because the farmers rely heavily on the ox for their livelihood. An ox is no less than a god on the yellow earth.



EXOTIC PEASANT ARTS OF ANSAI

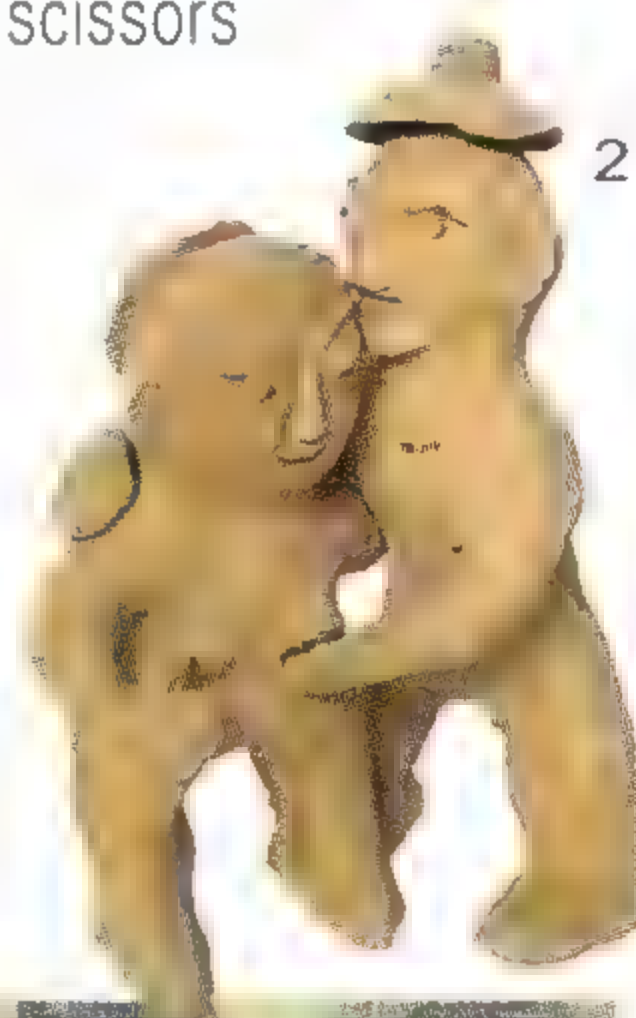
Article by Zhou Ping

We had seen many small, exquisite papercuts but only knew what really good ones were like when we saw the vivid works of the farmers shown in the Gallery of Folk Arts in Ansai. The largest piece on display, entitled *Chairman Mao Lives in Our Hearts*, is as tall as a man. Its upper part has a bust of Mao Zedong with the Pagoda Hill in the background. Below are people beating drums and gongs, playing the suona horns and performing the Waist-Drum Dance.

The peasant paintings were done in striking colours with figures portrayed in simple and exaggerated lines, imparting a rich flavour of the rural life. These paintings contained passion that probably comes from being close to the soil. The rag dolls on display were colourful and loveable too. There were also dough sculptures of simple and beautiful shapes.



The papercuts of Ansai are high in artistic accomplishments. Watching a demonstration by a senior artist, we saw that armed with the pair of scissors he transformed the pieces of paper in almost no time into flying birds, prowling animals, flowers and grass, and human figures. There were no



patterns and he made no drafts. The work was simply done by intuition in one go, but it looks simple, unpretentious and full of flavour. The larger works are the size of an umbrella, and the smaller ones like a butterfly.

The peasant paintings of Ansai are exotic and slightly strange. Painted in simple and contrasting colours, and similar to the avant-garde art of the West, they have been highly acclaimed by some Western artists.

Ansai's clay sculptures are characterised by distortion and exaggeration. Clumsy but loveable, there are nudes as well as figures portraying love.

Travel tips: Papercuts are sold at the Gallery of Folk Arts in Ansai; prices range from 3 to about 500 yuan. Prices for peasant paintings start from 200 yuan.

1. Yanchuan is the hometown of patchwork picture. (by Baoxiu)
2. A clay sculpture work by a woman farmer (by Xiaogang)
3. This painting is free in its expression and unfettered by the laws of perspective. (by Xiaogang)
4. A *Bride on Her Wedding Day*, a papercut (by Xiaogang)
5. The cave artists (by Yankang)
6. Fancy steamed bread used as Spring Festival offerings are now also sculpted in clay as folk art. (by Wang Pei)
7. Wang Dahai (second from left) specialises in Mao Zedong statuettes. (by Xiaogang)
8. Sishilipu in Suide is famed as the home of stone carving. (by Baoxiu)
9. It seems to be a Picasso-style art work. (by Xiaogang)





TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Transportation

- **Air:** There are regular flights from Xi'an to Yan'an every Thursday, departing at 8:50 and arriving at 9:35. There is a daily flight from Xi'an to Yulin, departing at 8:30 and arriving at 9:40.
- **Train:** Trains No.662/661 run overnight between Xi'an and Yan'an, taking about eight hours. There are soft-seat and hard-seat coaches and a dining coach in the trains.
- **Bus:** There are daily bus services between Xi'an and Yan'an-Yulin, and from Yan'an and Yulin to the other counties in northern Shaanxi. For more convenience, travellers can hire a taxi. A jeep generally costs about 500 yuan a day, and a small Charade, about 400 yuan. (Fuel is included, but you have to pay for the driver's food, lodging and tip.)
- **Donkey:** As there are often no highways leading to places on the Loess Plateau, one way of seeing the sights and folk customs in remote villages is to hire a donkey, which can carry you 30 to 50 kilometres in a day. The donkeys are meek and obedient, and it is a pleasant way to enjoy the natural scenery. Every farmer household has donkeys; they may be hired by the hour or day and must be accompanied by the owner. The fees start from 10 yuan.

- **Dough strips in mutton soup:** The dough strips are handmade and cooked in fresh mutton soup. The local people add chilli oil to the soup.
- **Glutinous millet cakes:** The cakes made of glutinous millet flour are steamed and eaten with honey or sugar. They can also be cut into pieces and fried in oil, or wrapped with bean curd and vegetables and fried.



- **Pancakes:** Paper-thin pancakes made of buckwheat and baked in a flat pan are a special snack of Zichang County. Bean sprouts, bean noodles and meat slivers are wrapped in them.
- **Donkey's intestines:** The richly-flavoured, stewed donkey's intestines are a famous food of Suide County.

- **Xiangna:** Yulin's Xiangna cake is made with flour and liquor, and fried in oil. Its origin dates back to the Tang Dynasty.
- There are also fried cakes, dough twists and bean noodles.

Special products

Dates: Dates are a special produce of northern Shaanxi. The best ones, from Qingjian, Jiaxian and Wubu, are known for their large size, thick flesh and sweetness. They are available in Yan'an, Yulin and other counties at about 16 yuan per kilogram.

Millet: Millet is a health food on the Loess Plateau. The best comes from Mizhi and is available everywhere at about six yuan per kilogram. Millet gruel cooked with dates is a good nourishing winter food.

Warnings

1. The winter temperature on the northern Shaanxi plateau is usually -15°C and the air is dry. Bring warm clothes and carry skin moisturiser.
2. Be prepared for local bus drivers who often ask passengers to switch buses when one is not full.
3. During the Spring Festival holidays (from the first to the fifth day of the first lunar month), most restaurants, except those in hotels, are closed. Carry appropriate foods with you.
4. Taxi fares during the Spring Festival are higher than other days because business is brisk.
5. The seventh to the 16th day of the first lunar month are the most roaring days of festivities (dances and parades) in the county towns and villages of northern Shaanxi. Visitors should contact the local governments or cultural centres for information.

Hotels

- Yan'an Hotel: Starting from 150 yuan;
- Ansai Hotel: Starting from 130 yuan;
- Suide Hotel: Starting from 130 yuan;
- Mizhi Hotel: Starting from 100 yuan;
- Shenmu Hotel: Starting from 120 yuan;
- Fugu Hotel: Starting from 110 yuan;
- Jiaxian Guesthouse: Starting from 80 yuan.

The above prices are for standard rooms with a bathroom attached and central heating in winter. There are also lower-grade hostels in various places which cost about 50 yuan.

Food

Food and refreshments in northern Shaanxi are known for their local flavour and come in many varieties.

- **Mutton soup:** Sheep's brain, trotters and entrails are boiled in a soup and eaten with parsley and chilli. It is an intensely warming food in winter.



A Ten-Day Stay at a Suzhou Farmer's Home

Photos & article by Diana

When I told a Shanghai friend that I would go to Suzhou in Jiangsu Province for 10 days, he immediately volunteered a place for me to stay. He said an old colleague's family living in the Suzhou countryside would welcome me as their guest. So, last September I went to the Tangs' home in a small village of Fengqiao Township in Suzhou.

At 6 a.m. that day, Tang Jianying came to meet me at the wharf. She had a gentle look, and luckily I recognised her at first glance. We first took a bus to the outskirts of Suzhou, then a taxi to the village entrance, from where we walked to her home. The journey seemed complicated, but what I saw on the way deeply impressed me.

All the houses in Tongdun Village are old stone buildings, with paddy fields and vegetable plots lying in front. The village has a small barbershop (a haircut including washing is five yuan), a tailor shop, two stores and a primary school, as simple as any Guangdong village 10 years ago.

The Tangs have a son, a daughter-in-law and a grandson, and they all live together. Their daughter is married and lives with her husband's family. At that time, the head of the family was away on a business trip to Yunnan. Old Mrs. Tang offered me her room and her old-fashioned, wide bed, while she moved over to the new house just in front.

The first night, all the Tangs were very curious about me when they returned home from work or school, and they all graciously said it was an honour to have a Hong Kong guest in their home. Mrs. Tang even took me out to show me to her fellow villagers. For a time my arrival became quite an event in the village.

Supper was quite simple. All the vegetables were home-grown. They washed the rice grains in the river before doing it again at home with tap water. They cooked rice and dishes in big cauldrons on an earthen kitchen stove over a wood fire. Watching them I felt that I had gone back in time.

The meal, though simply prepared, was one of the most tasty and delicious meals I ever had. The freshly-picked soy beans and the nameless aquatic vegetables were especially




The hostess working in the field

good. Sometimes Mrs. Tang prepared Suzhou-style dishes such as river snails with ginger juice and a kind of eel-like little fish for me.

The local villagers live a routine life and cherish their family life. Every morning they leave for work around seven and come home at a little past

six in the evening. After supper they would sit together to chat about everything under heaven, and go to bed at half past eight. When I asked how they could live such a settled life, they answered by asking back: Why must people work overtime and lose the chance to enjoy happiness together with their family? I went out in the morning and returned to the village by bus in the evening every day. As the village is in a remote area, I had to ask for a ride on a motorbike for some distance. Drivers asked me why I came from faraway Hong Kong to do "sightseeing" in such a backward village, and I replied that the experiences I got there were something I could not get from the historical sites or scenic spots.

The simple country life was interesting indeed, but there was still some real problems for me, like the mosquitoes. Words could not describe the suffering. Moreover, it was also a problem going to lavatory. Since farmers value natural manure very much, I had to go to a small open-air spot outside the house surrounded with only a twig fence.

The lifestyle in the Suzhou countryside is not an ideal one, but certainly it is useful to understand life from a different angle and make adjustments along the road of life. 

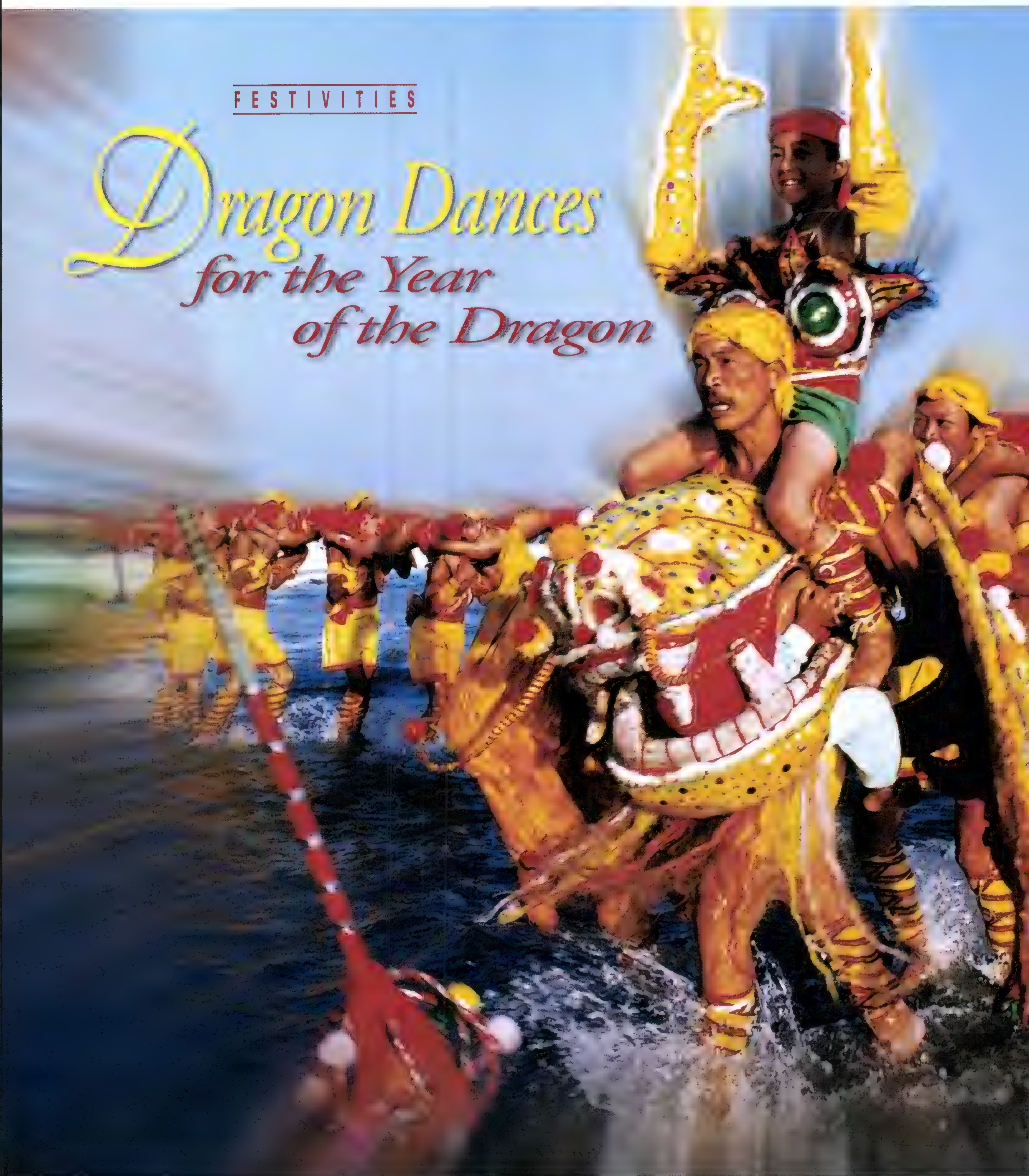
Translated by Xiong Zhenru



The house where the author stayed

FESTIVITIES

Dragon Dances for the Year of the Dragon



The dragon's head and tongue positions must be taken by boys born in the Year of the Dragon.



The first year in the new millennium happens to be the Year of the Dragon. For the Chinese people, who regard the dragon highly, this has added meaning.

It is of course a must to perform the dragon dance in the Year of the Dragon. As China is a vast land with a large population, it is natural that its dragon dances are varied in many styles, including the incense dragons, fire dragons, drunken dragons, firecracker dragons, human dragons, bench dragons and many more. Places and time of their performances are different too, but the purpose of all dragon dances is the same — for auspices. During these performances, amidst sounds of firecrackers and drums, various kinds of dragons come to life. Here we take you to various places to see the colourful and characteristic dragon dances.

Fire Dragon Huanglongxi, Sichuan Photo & article by Xiaochuan

Huanglongxi, a small ancient town with only a few hundred households in Sichuan Province, becomes packed with tourists every year at the time when the traditional Fire Dragon Dance is performed during the Spring Festival celebrations.

A string of firecrackers fired at the performance ground announces the arrival of a group of strong male dragon dancers, all wearing shorts and straw hats. Suddenly another string goes off loudly. Someone drags a string of firecrackers among the dancers and deliberately lets them explode beside the dancers' feet, making the men jump. After the firecrackers, the "burning the fire dragon" starts. The onlookers each have a fire-projection tube in hand, and they shoot fire at the dragon's head, body and tail. Cheers, firecrackers, smoke and fire are all mixed up in a sea of excitement. The fire is propelled at these dancers' bare skin but they are not afraid at all. Some in the crowd complain that the fire shooters have no mercy, that they are too close or that the fire is too fierce. Others claim that the dancers apply a layer of fat on their skin for protection, yet the dancers say they apply nothing.

The dragon dancing in a sea of fire



Drunken Dragon Macao

Photo & article by Suolang Zhaxi

The Drunken Dragon Dance is very popular in Macao, but its actual hometown is in Zhongshan of Guangdong. Wooden dragons were the drunken dragons' original form and they were not drunk at all. Sixty years after it was introduced to Macao from Shiqi of Zhongshan, it developed into today's drunken dragon. For various reasons, the Drunken Dragon Dance, which disappeared in its hometown long ago, has become a popular folk activity in Macao.

Annually, on the 8th day of the fourth lunar month, the Drunken Dragon Dance is performed. This is an exclusive programme of the fishermen in Macao. The dragon consists of only two parts, a head and tail.

It is not easy to do the Drunken Dragon Dance, so usually there are two teams who perform in turn. The team at rest pours the alcohol for the dancers. In the beginning, the dragon dancers have to pretend to be drunk. Halfway through the dance, after they have had too much alcohol, especially strong liquor, they really become drunk. The dancers' faces all turn crimson and their clothes become soaked with beer and liquor. With glazed eyes, they spit out liquor, proving that it is not fake. Then the dragon staggers, like a true drunken dragon. Local people say that the Drunken Dragon Dance can be performed only when the dancers are truly drunk.



The drunken dragon has only a head and tail, but the dancers perform vibrantly.

The flowery dragon surrounds and protects the lantern. (by He Shujiong)



The dragon enters the Ox Mouth Village by crossing the pond. (by He Shujiong)



Flowery Lantern Dragon

Pancun Village, Guangdong

Article by He Shujiong, Liang Shaofeng

On the 13th day of the first lunar month every year, the traditional Flowery Lantern Dragon Dance takes place in Pancun Village of Kaiping, Guangdong. According to legend, Pancun suffered floods for several years in the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The local people believed that this had something to do with the stone hill which resembled a sleeping lion. To wake up the sleeping lion, the villagers used bamboo strips and coloured paper to make three large flowery lanterns in the shape of a pearl, a symbol of the Dragon King's authority. They also invited an artisan to make a golden gauze dragon, which toured the villages to dispel the disaster.

At Pancun's ancestral temple a senior villager in traditional costume presides over the opening ceremony, and then firecrackers are set off. Golden dragons rush in one after another, twisting and turning. Then someone shouts, "Pass under the dragon's belly!" All the onlookers rush into the playground and swarm under the dancing dragon. The local people believe that this brings them good luck.

At the climax, three salutes are fired. About 100 young men carry the flowery lanterns out of the temple and the golden dragons chase them. Amid the sound of gongs and drums, the dancers start touring the streets and lanes of the ancient town.

When the team comes to the Niukou (Ox Mouth) Village, it has to stop because it would be unlucky to send the dragon lantern into the ox's mouth. They then have to enter the village across a pond. Now, though the tradition of the dragon parade remains, the Niukou Village has changed its name to Jinlong (Golden Dragon) Village.

Fire Dragon Tai Hang, Hong Kong

Photo and article by Dai Xu

The Fire Dragon Dance in Tai Hang in Hong Kong started in 1880. Its origin comes from a fantasy: Once a huge boa attacked this small Hakka village (today's Tai Hang) and was beaten to death by the villagers. But the dead boa disappeared mysteriously and a plague befell the village. In a dream, an old villager learned that the boa was the Dragon King's son; the villagers had to perform a fire dragon dance and set off firecrackers for three days to intimidate the Dragon King. They followed the old man's dream and the plague stopped.

Annually, on the evenings of the 14th to 16th days of the eighth lunar month, a two-hour Fire Dragon Dance takes place at Tai Hang. On the first evening, a ceremony is held at the Tian Hau Temple to decorate the new fire dragon. Incense sticks are then stuck into the dragon. Its head is made of rattan and weeds, and its 61-metre-long body, hemp and straw. Burning incense covers the whole dragon. A pair of dragon pearls, symbols of the Dragon King's authority, also full of incense, leads the way, three steps left and three right. During the dance, the heavy dragon head bobs up and down. It is hard for dancers at the dragon's tail. While jumping and running to follow the body, they also bear the inertia of the whole body's swinging motions. As the burning dragon excitedly shifts and turns, changing patterns, it lights up the neighbourhood.



The fire dragon dances wildly in the open.



Villagers competing to light the dragon (by Han Yong)

Incense Dragon Huizhou, Anhui

Article by Boqian

The Incense Dragon Dance, a folk custom found in the villages of Anhui to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, started in the Tang and Song dynasties, and became popular in the late Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

The incense dragon has a unique local style, bold and boorish. Its straw body measures about 60 metres long. Bamboo strips are tied in two circles, like lips, around a block of wood to form the head. The horns and beard are also made of bamboo. Taro stalks, with incense sticks stuck in them, are tied onto the head and body. A pumpkin lantern, also punctured by incense sticks, sits on the head.

At sunset, the dragons all gather at the village entrance. In front of each one is a "pearl" — an incense-loaded pumpkin, to lead the dance. As night falls, following an order to light all the incense, the dragon dance begins. Suddenly, drums and gongs are beaten and firecrackers set off, and cheers and shouts resound. The children make their own metre-long incense dragons and go from door to door singing and performing to offer auspicious greetings. One song goes like this: "The incense dragon comes early, and you'll have a good harvest in the coming year. The incense dragon dances lively, and everyone will be happy and healthy."

Bench Dragon Pujiang, Zhejiang

Article by Hang Jun

The bench dragon, known locally as the "Long Lantern", is a well-known tradition in Pujiang County, Zhejiang. Customarily, the festivities start on the 11th day of the first lunar month and peak on the 14th and 15th days. The head of the dragon, made of a block of wood and bamboo strips, is two metres high and four metres long. Colourful scales are painted on the paper pasted on it. The dragon head of each village is made according to the shape of each village's geomantic hill. Arched lanterns with red candles inside are placed on the body, which is formed of bench slats.

In the morning, a respected old man of the village beats a gong, walking from door to door, and then he fetches a lantern to lead the dragon head out of the ancestral temple. The villagers use their own slats and lanterns to connect up the dragon's body, and soon a long bench dragon takes form.



Each person carries a "bench" to form a long dragon. (by Sun Dong)

Fireworks Dragon *Taijiang, Guizhou*

Article by Dai Xu

Taijiang in Guizhou Province is inhabited by the Miao people. Annually, from the 13th to 16th day of the third lunar month, the Miaos celebrate their Sisters' Rice Festival, which includes the Fireworks Dragon Dance.

After the opening day's carnival activities, people stream into the streets in the evening for the Fireworks Dragon Dance. A group of young Miaos, often bare-chested, perform with a dozen colourful dragons, sometimes twisting, sometimes rolling up and down. Hollowed out palm tree trunks and bamboo tubes are filled with a gunpowder mixture for the fireworks. When they are lit, fire spits out, targeting the dragon. All of a sudden, the site becomes a sea of excitement with hundreds of fireworks going off, the dragons dancing, the gongs and drums deafeningly beaten. The dragon, made of bamboo strips wrapped with red paper scales, soon becomes heavily "wounded".



The dancing fireworks dragon (by Chan Yat Nin)

The straw dragon at the village entrance (by Zhang Binsheng)

Straw Dragon *Lizhuang Village, Sichuan*

Article by Wang Chunhui

Lizhuang Village is situated 18 kilometres east of Yibin in Sichuan on the Yangtse River. Legend says that long ago there was a demon on a nearby mountain. Every winter it came down to hurt people and kill domestic animals. Later people found that it feared of light, sound and strange shadows. When the demon came, they scared it away immediately by lighting lamps, making a crackling fire with bamboo tubes and creating strange shadows, all the while beating gongs and drums. The object that made strange shadows was actually a dozen-metre-long dragon made of straw.

Usually in Lizhuang, the Straw Dragon Dance starts on the 5th day and ends on the Lantern Festival, the 15th day of the first lunar month. The straw dragon appears in the streets, fields and courtyards, visiting different villages and households. Villagers buy firecrackers and make dragon lanterns, and everyone has a jolly good time. On the 15th day, neighbouring villagers all carry their straw dragons to Lizhuang, gathering in the Zhenhuiguang Temple to show their skills and give performances.

The dragon spine is made of a local *nan* bamboo found all over southern Sichuan. Thin bamboo strips are for the framework of the dragon head and body. Then straw is tied to the framework and rings are made on the head and back for the dragon's scales. The straw belly swings gracefully, and the square head with blackened eyes and wide open mouth looks quite fierce.



The dragon is made of *nan* bamboo and straw.
(by Zhang Binsheng)

The dragon parading through firecrackers and smoke

Firecracker Dragon Binyang, Guangxi Photo & article by Xiaochuan

The 11th day of the first lunar month is the Lantern and Wine Festival in Binyang County of Guangxi. It is actually a party to celebrate the births of male babies. Each family with a new-born son contributes a chicken.

The highlight of the festival is the Firecracker Dragon Dance. As night falls, bare-chested young men wearing cane hats and supporting cloth dragons, assemble in front of the Land God Temple. Before the opening ceremony, the eyes of the dragon are covered with a cloth. After the removal of the cloth, a chicken is killed to let the blood drip on the eyes to announce the opening of the party. After that, firecrackers are set off and the dragon dance begins. A man holding a fire torch and carrying a bamboo basket of gunpowder follows the dragon. Now and then he grasps a handful of the gunpowder, throws it up in the air and then he holds up the torch; explosions and fire soar into the sky. When the dragon passes through the streets, strings of firecrackers are lit and thrown at the dragon. The dragon dances wildly amid fire, smoke and firecrackers. It is said that the more shattered the dragon's body, the more auspicious people's lives will be.

Human Dragon Donghai Island, Guangdong

The human dragon on Donghai Island in Zhanjiang of Guangdong originated in the Ming Dynasty and became popular in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). It was a folk activity to drive away evil spirits and pray for happiness. Since drums and gongs were added in the 1950s, the Human Dragon Dance has become an artistic folk performance. The Donghai people now celebrate both Mid-Autumn Festival and Spring Festival with the Human Dragon Dance.

The human dragon consists of interlocked men and children. The man playing the dragon's head carries a child on his shoulders as the dragon's horns, and another on his chest as the dragon's tongue. A man with twin coloured balls in hand leads the way and directs the movement of the dragon. The dragon twists, swings, and rises up and down. The important positions of the dragon's — head and tongue — must be played by boys who were born in the Year of the Dragon. This is to guarantee the authenticity of the dragon. The dragons tour the villages to offer greetings and expel evil. When they perform on the beach against a background of blue sea and sky, they strongly imply that "dragon comes from the Eastern Sea".



The human dragon roars along the beach. (Photographer of the picture please contact us.)



Crossing the Snowy

CHALLENGES

Biluo Mountain

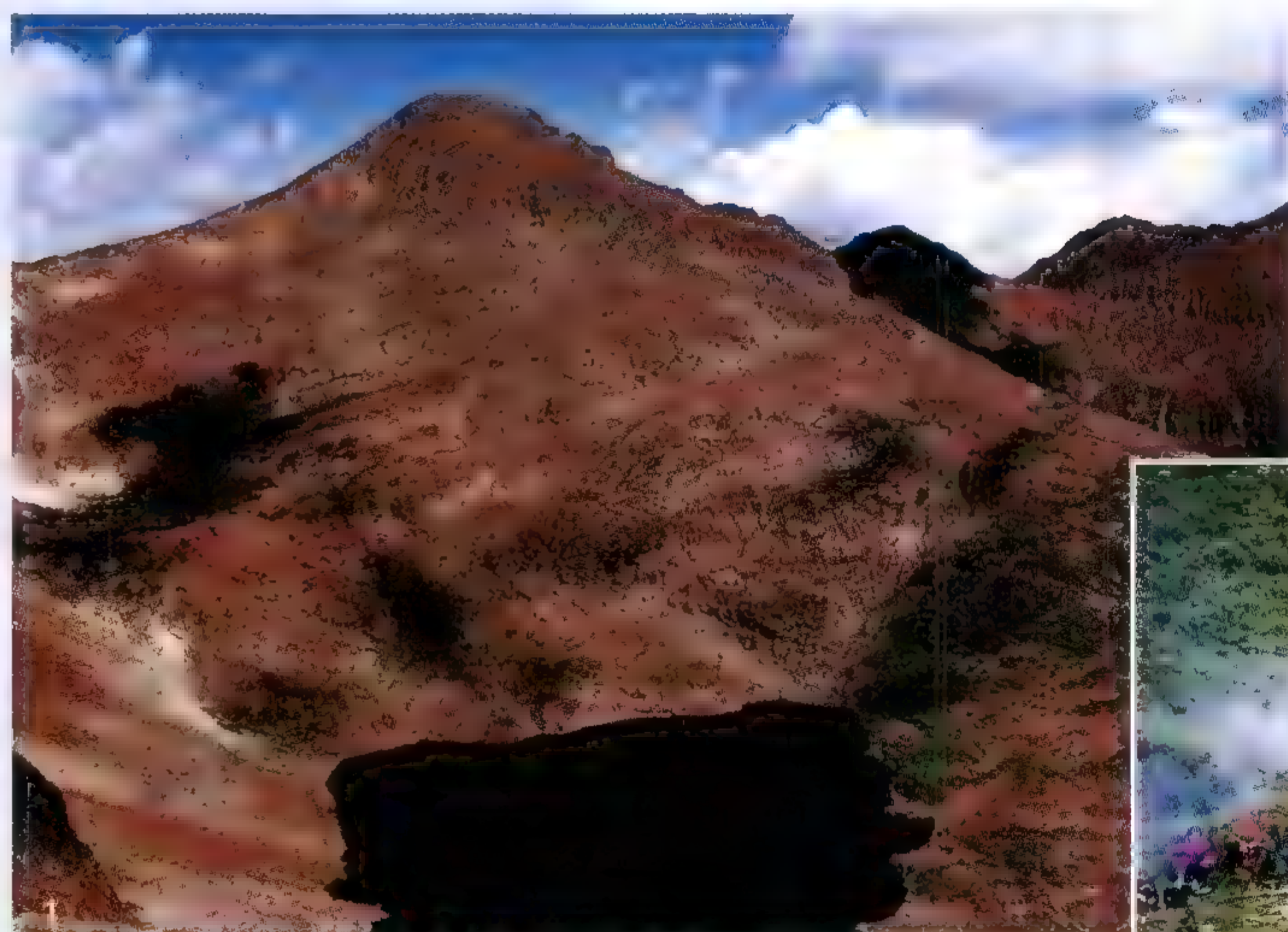
Photos by Zheng Yuanlong

Article by Jiang Jing

The snow-capped Biluo Mountain, part of the Hengduan Mountains, lies in northwest Yunnan Province. Its highest peak, Laowo, rises 4,435.4 metres above sea level, amidst of a cluster of 4,000-metre peaks. To its east are the Lancang and Jinsha rivers and the Yunling Mountain, and to its west, the Nujiang River and Gaoligong Mountain. Together they form a group of three mountain chains that extend north to south in parallel with three rivers. The over 3,000-metre drops in the Lancang and Nujiang river valleys give rise to a "vertical climate system", ranging from polar down to temperate and subtropical.



Route for Crossing the Biluo Mountain



Previous page, main photo:
As mules could not continue on the narrow mountain road, we had to carry everything by ourselves. (by Zhang Lianyong)

Small photo:
Rock cabbage growing in crevices

1. The 4,435-metre summit of Biluo Mountain and Lake Two at its foot (by Zhang Lianyong)

2. At Camp One

3. Gentian violets blooming in the wilderness

4. A group picture taken at the top of Laowo Peak, summit of Biluo

5. At Camp Two

6. The Flying-in Rock

One day in October, our group of 11 arrived at the Mountaineering Association office in Kunming. Since our chosen climbing route was far and remote, we had to carry our food, resulting in a heavy load for everyone. We walked to the Nanyao Bus Station, got on a sleeper bus and after 16 hours, covering 644 kilometres of bumpy road, arrived at Lanping Bai and Pumi Ethnic Autonomous County at 9 a.m. the next day. Here we boarded a minibus which took us to Zhongpai Township in five hours. That night, we slept in an old bungalow.

Exhaustion on Steep Slopes

The next day, excited, we got up very early. We drove our jeep northward along the Lancang River on a narrow pothole-filled road. It was after 10 a.m. when we arrived at Deqing Village at 1,995 metres altitude. We rented several mules,



loaded our gear on them, and trekked westward along the Deqing River. As the topography changed with the elevation, vegetation changed too. While broad-leaf forests filled the bottom of the dry and hot mountain valley, here we saw a transition to a mixture of broad-leaf and needle-leaf trees, which were thicker, with both towering trees and low broad-leaf bushes. Near dusk, we came to

Laowo Village at 2,450 altitude. The road there became steeper and unsuitable for the mules, so we paid off their owners and pushed ahead on foot.

It was turning dark and suddenly I was

struck by hunger. To conquer a 60-degree path was just too much for me. Dizzy and gasping for air, I could hardly lift my legs. I found a walking stick and kept going one step after the next. By the time I arrived at the hilltop, it was totally dark and I had lost my team-mates. Suddenly I heard a sound ahead of me and stopped to listen, fearful it was a wild animal. My heart slowed its pace when Zhang Teng appeared and said I was close to the camp. Though everyone was totally exhausted, Zhang Teng, thin and small as he was, came back to help me. I was overwhelmed with gratitude. Walking through the marshland and over another steep slope, I finally saw my group building a fire and putting up tents. What a great relief!

After supper, we built a big bonfire and drank tea and beer, and chatted around it. The fire illuminated half the mountain slope.

Wet Feet on the Marshland

I had a very good sleep and felt energetic the next morning. Sitting on a rock by a stream, I watched the gently flowing water, listening to its gurgle and enjoying a moment of tranquillity. At 10:30, we started climbing again, each carrying our own 22-kilogram bag. We surmounted peak after peak, climbed slope after slope and entered a forest of maples with beautiful green and yellow leaves, and enormous moss-covered trunks. The branches, also coated with moss, twisted around each other, crowned by all kinds of strangely shaped tree tops.

While crossing a small river, we met a villager from Laowo Village who was carrying highland potatoes on a two-day walk to Fugong to exchange them for rice. He said, as I noticed his long-handled sword, that the bamboo groves ahead were inhabited by bears. So, as I went through a bamboo grove, I stopped now and then, calling out to my team-mates. Sometimes the bamboo rustled, and fear of a bear charging out sent cold sweat down my back. Out of the bamboo groves there was a large expanse of thick, golden

grassland. It was actually a marshland and as I stepped on it, water bubbled under my feet. If I walked too slow, my feet sank. I explored my way with my stick and trudged ahead quickly to avoid being swallowed up by the marsh. On dry land, I had to change my wet shoes and socks before I continued on. Finally, before total darkness shrouded the land, we arrived at Camp Two.

Heading Towards Laowo Mountain

Exhausted after two days, I was still soundly asleep when the first group of mountaineers got up. The night before we decided to split into two groups. One group would go to conquer the Laowo Mountain peak while the other group of five headed by Mr. Yang would return to Deqing along the route we had come.

The seven of us pushed ahead toward the Laowo Mountain, a route which would eventually lead us to Fugong. This section became steeper as we neared the mountain top. Halfway up, I saw the mysteriously dark green water of the Nianboyibi Lake. The lake, which resembled a foot from the distance, was surrounded by fir groves. Further behind were peaks shooting up into the clouds. At dusk, we found a slope close to the Laowo Mountain Pass, where water was available, and set up two tents among the



trees. At 3,855 metres altitude, the wind was strong and the temperature only about 10°C. After dinner, we sat around the campfire, but I couldn't get warm. One side of me was scorching and the other chilly, whichever way I turned.

A Successful Ascent to the Top

Early in the morning, six of us started our climb. Nie Kun stayed behind at the camp, so we travelled light. At a platform called Yakou, we turned northward and walked laboriously for over two hours through the two-metre-high azalea trees. Then, turning eastward along the valley, we came to a slope too steep to cross and had to look for another path along the foot of the mountain. It was near noon before we finally found a pass. It was a 60-degree slope with its first 100 metres or so covered with rocks that



seemed very dangerous, but we had no other choice. To ensure safety and avoid falling rocks, we spaced ourselves out. After the loose-rock slope was a 300-metre-long section of cliffs at a 60- or 70-degree angle. At times we simply crawled up. Suddenly, a rock I had grabbed onto shifted and I quickly put my hand onto another spot. The loose rock began rolling down and I shouted out a warning. Before I could finish, I heard, "Ouch!" I felt the pain as if I had been struck myself. Just then, Mr. Zheng's voice came up: "Luckily, it hit my arm and not my head."

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At about noon we came to the top of the peak at 4,025 metres. We had a panoramic view of a row of five lakes inlaid in the green mountains like a string of pearls. To the far west stood the Laowo Mountain. We ate before heading toward Laowo along the mountain ridge which was tree-less but covered with thick colourful vegetation. Sheer cliffs with snow camellias dropped down from both sides of the ridge. We trudged ahead, running into snow lotus, rock cabbage, rough gentian and other highland plants.

At exactly 2:49 p.m. and after much hardship, we finally conquered the 4,435.4-metre Laowo Mountain. Our fatigue melted into excitement and joy. We cheered and shouted, as Li Zhi hoisted the flag of the Kunming Mountaineering Association and Zhang Teng produced a cloth poster stating the height for a photography session.

A Cold Night on the Mountain

Around 3:30 p.m., the weather suddenly changed and the mountains and lakes were no longer visible. We were caught by a heavy fog mingled with drizzle. The temperature took a sharp dip. We hurried down





1. Walking through a primeval forest
2. Snow lilies growing along the snow line
3. Catching sight of the sunrise
4. A hotpot meal in the wilderness
5. Firs growing on the mountain slopes (by Zhang Lianyong)

the very steep west slope with Zhang Teng in the lead. I used my hands for support and gingerly moved step by step. The rain had made everything slippery, increasing my fear.

Then I heard Zhang Teng say, "We have run into a vertical cliff and can't go down any further. We have to go back." Now I became the leader in retreat. I climbed on hands and knees up the peak again. We attempted the east slope, but it was becoming dark and we had to abandon our plan to return to the camp. After much difficulty, we left the metre-high azalea woods and entered the pine bushes, working our way over to Lake One. It was partially covered with ice. I took a mouthful of the icy water and ran to catch up with my team-mates. In the total darkness I felt lonely and afraid. I called out to a woman team-mate, nicknamed Little Taro, ahead of me, and relied on her voice for direction. I finally came to



Lake Two around 8 p.m. where everyone had gathered.

We found a spot shielded from the wind, gathered some wood and lit a fire. Apart from a raincoat, all I had brought was some biscuits. Zhang Teng had some bread and Li Zhi had a few pieces of chocolate. Our shoes and socks were completely soaked through. Cold and hungry, we were in a sorry plight. I took off my shoes and socks and put on my raincoat, rolling up in front of the fire.

The valley was very quiet, with twinkling stars above us. I tried to console myself, thinking that this was a rare opportunity to see the stars and moon so clearly, and that a night sleeping by a bonfire would be an unforgettable experience. After midnight, it became so cold that nobody could sleep, so we told stories, hoping that time would go faster.

Falling Asleep in a Rainstorm

At 8 a.m., we stamped out the fire and began another day's journey. On standing, I found that my left foot wouldn't stretch out straight. Trying to straighten it made my knee hurt. I used my stick for support and moved ahead despite the pain.

We planned to visit Lake Three first and then return to Lake Two to look for the way back. At mid-morning we arrived at Lake Three which was surrounded by fir and other species of trees with red autumn leaves. The sight was so beautiful that we felt our night in the wilderness had been worthwhile.



At noon, we snaked out of the azalea woods by Lake Two and saw the signal for reaching the

mountain pass symbolised by the Flying-in Rock. Realising we had found the way back, our spirits were immediately lifted. At the pass, we looked back and saw the Zhuizi Peak. As if we had been energised, we pushed on to the peak in great excitement. The slope was steep, and as I crawled I picked snow camellias to eat. In terrible hunger, the bitter plant tasted delicious and soothing. Near 2 p.m. we went through the Zhuizi Peak Pass and began our descent to the camp. A downpour started suddenly on our way down a steep slope. The route was very slippery and I decided to take shelter under a huge rock. Exhaustion overcame me and I slept soundly in the rainstorm.

Afterwards, with my strength back and the rain letting up, I continued my descent. My energy and stamina were soon wearing thin. The flashlight needed recharging, making the road hard to see. I convinced myself that I must keep walking, but my mind



went blank and my legs moved mechanically. It was with great joy that I greeted Nie Kun around 9 p.m. back at Camp Three.

A Hotpot Dinner at 4,000 Metres

I slept for a day and night, during which time my team-mates were busy cooking and eating. In the drizzle, wearing raincoats, they made a hotpot meal of sausages, ham, bean noodles and kelp. They remarked that this was the "Friendship Special — Biluo Hotpot at 4,000 Metres Altitude". Mr. Zheng contributed the salted duck he had brought.

At 11 a.m. we set off towards Fugong. Two hours later we arrived at the Laowu Mountain Pass at 4,010 metres, where the wind was blowing with almost gale force. The wind and near-freezing temperature made breathing difficult. We had to shield our nose and mouth with both hands before we could take a breath.

By 4 p.m. we arrived at the marshland around the Gandiyibi Lake at 3,395 metres above sea level. It started to rain again, and though my raincoat was in my rucksack, I no longer had the strength to pull it out. Helpless, I let the rain pour down on me. The lake and mountains were beautiful but I took no pictures. Unable to move another step, I found a log and lay down. I was wet all over, my feet were covered in mud, my knee hurt and both my hands were covered with bloody blisters. Looking at my bloody walking stick, tears ran down my cheeks.

Zhang Lianying was waiting for me. Seeing him, I was gripped by gratitude. Throughout our trip he kept waiting for me, showing his concern. He knew my flashlight was dead and so, in the dark he once again was there waiting. Using his flashlight we trudged toward the river valley. I could only hear the gurgling of the flowing water. At nearly 3 a.m. we still could not find a village, so we decided to sleep on a huge stone slab in the middle of a road.

A Satisfying Meal with a Lisu Family

I awoke before 8 a.m., revived by a short sleep. I got organised and told Mr. Zhang that I would start earlier because I was slower.

The valley in the morning was a sight of enchanting scenery. The mountains were as beautiful as those of Mount Huangshan, with peak after peak covered with green vegetation. In the distance the Gaoligong Mountain was dimly visible through mist and cloud. I came upon a canal circling the mountain and saw beautiful flowers of all colours blooming on the banks. I picked a bunch of flowers and put them on a heap of pebbles by the road as a gift of gratitude for my team-mates who would soon pass by.

Eventually, we saw the Nujiang River. Later, around noon, we came to a village at 1,880 metres, inhabited by the Lisu people. We entered a hospitable villager's house and took out all the food from our bags. The appetite I lacked for days suddenly reappeared. The villagers brought us a basket of pears and then cooked a large pot of rice and a big dish of green vegetable. At the sight of the green vegetable, which we had missed for days, our eyes lit up. After lunch, we went to the village church. The Lisus are mostly Christians and have a bible and hymns written in Lisu script.

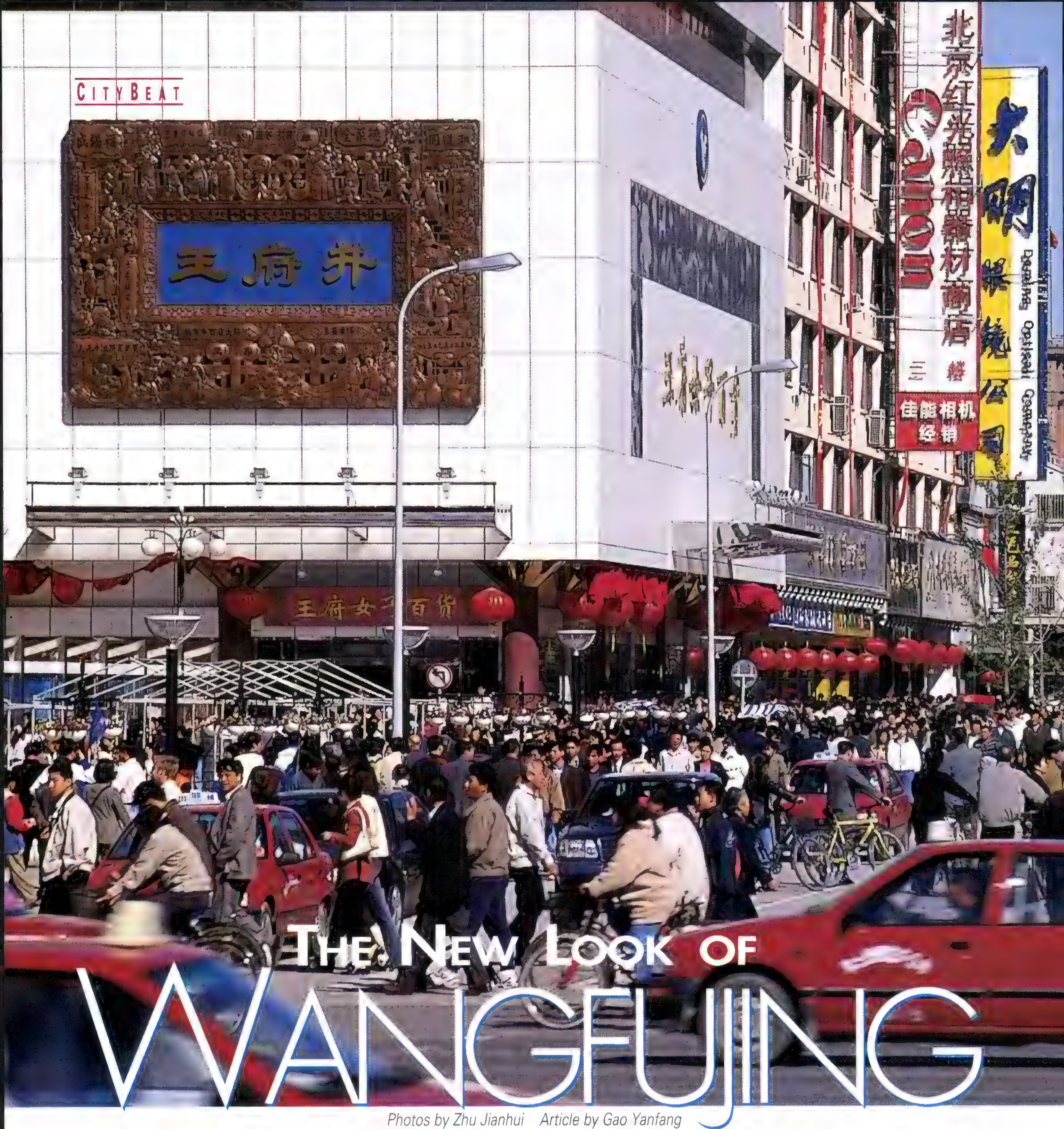
We offered 20 yuan to pay for the food but they said it was too much. We pushed it back and also gave some of our food. Zhang Lianying gave them our cooking utensils as gifts. The temperature was 34°C as we walked down the mountain path. In the distance, we saw vehicles on the highway by the river and the contour of Fugong. After a night in Fugong we took a 22-hour bus ride back to Kunming.

We had spent eight days of our 12-day trip in the mountains, enduring all kinds of hardships. The trip was an incredible experience that embodied all there is to human life. So long as I can walk, I've made up my mind, I will go and conquer more mountains.



Translated by F. Huang





Photos by Zhu Jianhui Article by Gao Yanfang

Wangfujing Street, one of the busiest streets in Beijing, has long been known as “China’s No.1 Commercial Street”. Because of the long, deep influence of the culture of the ancient capital, it not only has the charms of a busy shopping centre but also possesses the historical and human features of the social customs and regional culture of Beijing. After eight years of renovation, it has become a particularly worthwhile place to visit for shopping and sightseeing.



New Features Following Renovation

"Wangfujing has become more beautiful!" people exclaim as soon as they arrive at the southern end of Wangfujing Street between Beijing Hotel and Dongfang Plaza and look along this commercial street. This 12-metre wide central street is paved with Laizhou red granite and flanked by commercial buildings and shops. The 100-year-old Wangfujing Street, always the top commercial street in Beijing, has begun to show its new elegant demeanour after eight years of renovation at a cost totalling one billion yuan.

Wangfujing contains noted shops such as Beijing Department Store, which represent modern China's state-owned commercial establishments, and many other old shops. It has become the "golden street" every Chinese resident has yearned for. Statistics show that in the 1980s Wangfujing's highest flow of customers was 450,000 people a day. The survey made by the Wangfujing Area Development Office in 1994 indicated that the flow of customers on this busy street had reached 550,000 a day in ordinary time, and 750,000 to 770,000 on holidays.

Wangfujing Street has totally changed. The sidewalks are paved with red, yellow and grey bricks, with no railings or kerbs, completely free from obstruction. Ninety-one ginkgo trees have been planted along the sides of the street, and flower beds, flower



1. Wangfujing is Beijing's busiest commercial street.
2. The statue of a rickshaw boy, a memory of the past





tubs and flower stands form a sea of flowers, dotted by modern telephone booths and street lights. On the sidewalks, benches are positioned every dozen metres for people to take a rest. But what brightens up the street most are the newly-renovated shops with fashionable decorations and designs.

A Gathering of Famous Old Shops

Stretching for 1,100 metres, the new Wangfujing Street has a total building floor space of 2 million square metres. Its total shopping floor space has expanded to 1.5 million square metres, six times larger than its previous scale. There are some of Asia's largest commercial buildings, such as Dongfang Plaza, New Dong'an Arcade, Beijing Department Store, The Great Arts and Crafts World and Danyao Tower. Dongfang Plaza has a total building floor space of 960,000 square metres, of which 100,000 square metres will house top world-level department stores. The street also has China's highest density of top hotels, including the Beijing Hotel, The Palace Hotel, Peace Hotel, Taiwan Hotel, Tianlun Dynasty Hotel and Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. Also concentrated there are many of Beijing's famous old shops, such as Shengxifu Hat Shop, Tongshenghe Shoe Store, Chengguzhai Studio, Jianhua Leather and Fur Shop, Silian Barbershop, China Photo Studio, Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant, Wuyutai Tea Shop, Baicao Traditional Chinese Medicine Pharmacy, and Pulande Laundry. They tinge this golden street with a strong historical air.

Although boutiques of famous European and American fashion labels have found their way onto the

street, the renovated Beijing Department Store has retained most of its original 1950's design and even its building materials, and characteristic commodities remain part of its business. The New Dong'an Arcade is filled with many famous shops; the Women's Department Store covers the needs of modern women who follow fashion; the New China Children's Shop guides children on becoming a good consumer; and the Yak Suit Shop adorns its customers with goods for the "modern gentlemen".

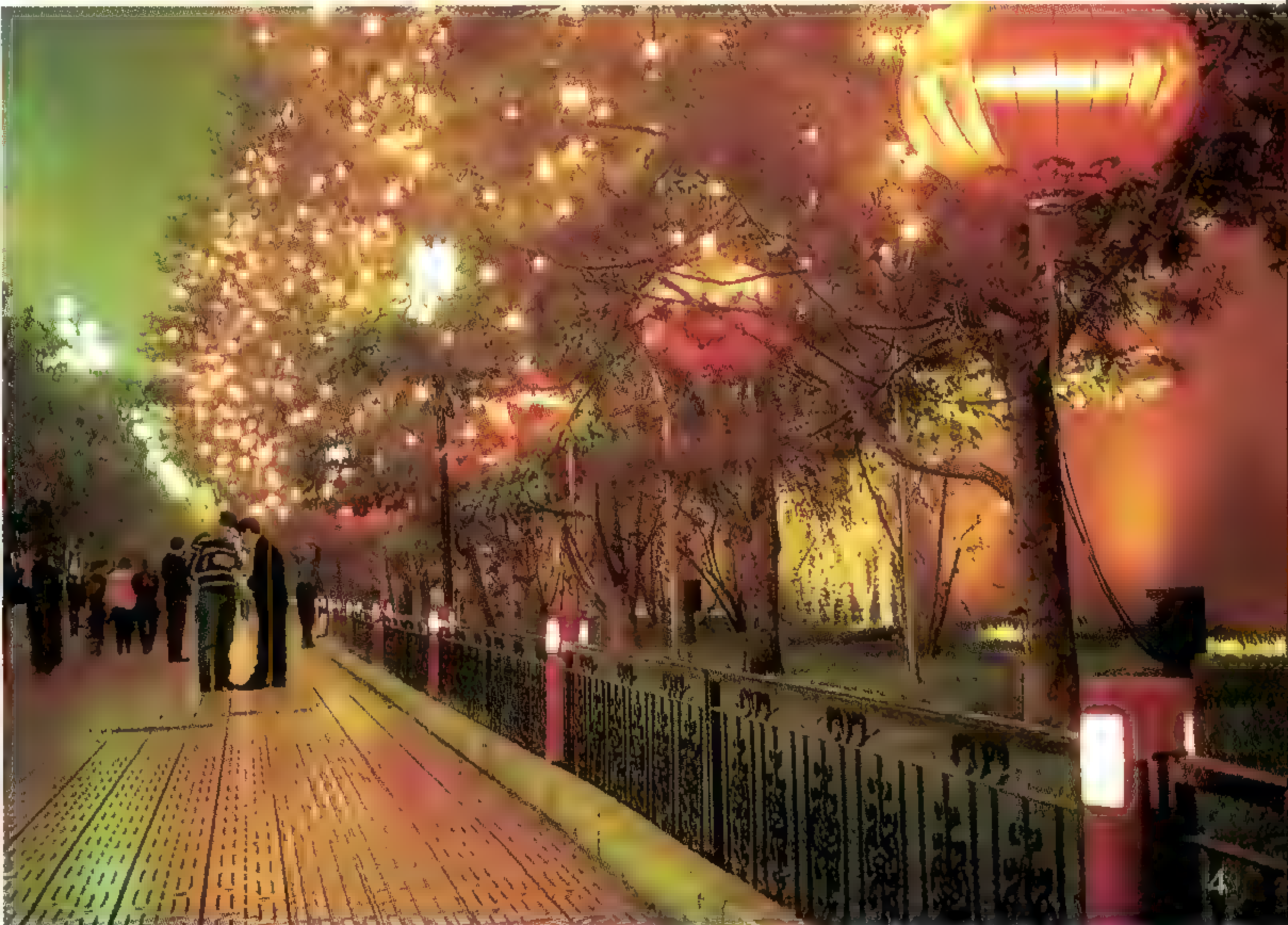
According to a rough estimate, among the 70 major shops on this commercial street, 17 specialise in leisure and hobbies, such as the sports suits and shoes stores, spectacles shops, and arts and handicrafts shops.

A Place for Eating, Drinking and Pleasure

Wangfujing's services are being perfected day by day too. Banks have proliferated to serve customers. On the western side of the street there are two offices of the Industrial and Commercial Bank, and on the eastern side are the Bank of China and the Bank of Communications. Customers on this street do not need to worry about finding a place to satisfy their appetite or take a rest either. Restaurants serving both Chinese and Western delicacies and snack shops are found everywhere.

According to Beijing's city development plan, the commercial Wangfujing Street is to be developed into a prime area for trade and finance. The key point is that it will become a street dealing with commodities at the world level, and a comprehensive consumer street where people can

1. Many new buildings have risen on this old street.
2. Taking a nostalgic picture
3. The newly renovated Shengxifu Hat Shop
4. A night scene





enjoy themselves while going about their business and shopping.

At the entrance of the New Dong'an Arcade, a group of three surrealistic sculptures vividly reflects the life of Beijing people in the past. One depicts a rickshaw boy, another shows two street ballad singers, and the third a young woman combing the hair of an old lady. Every day, these sculptures have attracted the looks and the cameras of many people.

Large Shops Add to the Flavour

The New Dong'an Arcade is actually the rebirth of the former Dong'an Market, which had a long history. Having started business in 1903, it was one of Beijing's four oldest arcades. Older Beijing citizens still remember the old Dong'an Market which was housed in a simple, shed-style building that covered a floor space of 6,000 square metres. Though simple, it satisfied the shopping needs of

the people at that time. According to statistics, the old arcade's customers would reach 800,000 a day during holidays.

After renovation, the New Dong'an Arcade started its business with the slogan: "The 100-year-old Dong'an Arcade will become a customer's paradise." In addition to escalators, two glass-enclosed elevators have been installed, making shopping a more pleasurable experience. The ground floor contains old shops specialising in traditional Chinese trades. Tongrentang Traditional Chinese Medicine Pharmacy and Liubiju Pickle Shop have their retail shops there. Though housed in the arcade, the shops all have their independent gateway with antique decorations and well-versed antithetical couplets of different styles on their doors. It is really an nostalgic area for older Beijingers. While roaming about in these shops, customers can savour the ancient Chinese commercial culture.

If anyone wants to taste traditional Beijing snacks, the New Dong'an Arcade is the right place to satisfy your needs. On the fifth floor there are many restaurants specialising in various snacks and dishes, such as Beijing's Li Family tea soup, Feng Family fried tripe, stir-fried liver, Dalian cakes, as well as delicacies of other provinces, such as Sichuan noodles with hot sauce, Yunnan rice noodles, Guangdong tea and pastries. Foreign cuisine such as Brazilian roast meat, and Japanese and Korean snacks can also be found here. No-one could leave here hungry.

The Beijing Department Store has been renowned for being the "First Department Store of New China". The entire building looks much brighter inside. The most eye-catching is its six new escalators. The new customers' rest hall and display board for foreign exchange rates on the first floor are additions that are





seldom seen in other stores in the capital. Some local potpourri items, such as sewing kits, not available in other arcades, can be found here too. On the ground floor, a special area offers traditional Chinese-style clothing such as cloth shoes, men's buttoned jackets, Manchu dresses and costumes of minority ethnic groups.

The China Photo Studio, on the street's eastern side, appears like the inside of a camera, with windows resembling the gear holes on either side of a film role. Founded in 1937 in Shanghai and moved to Beijing in 1956, the shop was listed by the Ministry of Internal Trade as one of China's oldest shops in 1993. For over half

a century, the China Photo Studio has been known for its "outstanding services provided by excellent photographers". Further north up the street, the Green House Department Store, one of Wangfujing's new-generation shops, has a huge collection of famous snacks from various parts of China on its first floor. In addition to popular Beijing snacks such as soup of baked flour, boiled lamb head and New Year Cake, there are also chicken cooked in Jiangsu, Sichuan and Henan styles, cakes and dumplings of different flavours, and fried dough from Tianjin. On

its third floor is a department store for Korean goods.

Today Wangfujing's business scale has been greatly enlarged. It is like a kaleidoscope in its multiple functions involving regional culture, commercial business, catering for trade and tourism, and is unmatched by any other area of Beijing.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

1. Dong'an Market re-appears with a modern look.
2. Jianhua Leather and Fur Shop
3. The Beijing Department Store founded in the 1950s
4. The well marking the history of Wangfujing Street

An Ancient Well Tells the History

It has been nearly 100 years since the name of Wangfujing Street was formally designated. "Wangfu" actually means prince's residence and "jing" means well, referring to an ancient well, which was actually existed. Having been hidden for over 70 years, the well is in front of the Hengfusheng Shop on the opposite side of New Dong'an Arcade. On the bronze cover of the well are carved a coiling dragon and the history of the Wangfujing Street: "Wangfujing Street was built in the fourth year of the Zhiyuan Reign of the Yuan Dynasty. It was once called 'The Tenth Prince's Residence Street' and 'The Prince's Residence Street'. According to research, the present name, Wangfujing, originated from this mid-Ming Dynasty well. The location of the well is clearly marked both in The Map of the Capital City of the Qianlong Reign of the Qing Dynasty and The Actual Survey Map of the Inner and Outer Cities of Beijing drawn in the second year of the Republic (1913). The well was totally hidden during the 1920s but rediscovered in 1998 when the street was renovated."

In the early 1920s, following the Qing Dynasty's demise, Wangfujing Street thrived with foreign customers from the nearby embassy area. Lined with a great variety of shops, some quite old, the street continued as the capital's busiest and most popular shopping area. At that time foreigners called it Morrison Street, because of a reporter of the British Thames Times in Beijing named Morrison, who came to China in 1897, bought the No. 100 building in Wangfujing Street (present-day Swiss Watch Repair Shop) as his residence in 1902. Even an English street nameplate was put up there after Yuan Shikai, the arch usurper of state power, proclaimed himself emperor.





A DAY IN NANSHA

— a Rising City in Panyu

Photos & article by Hua Nian

It takes about an hour by boat from Hong Kong to get to the Nansha Peninsula at the mouth of the Pearl River. On the west bank of the river is the Dajiao Hill dotted with elegant buildings whose yellow glazed tiles sparkle in the sun, seemingly sending greetings to ships and visitors. These buildings are home to a temple for Mazu (Tianhou),



the legendary Goddess of the Sea, who protects people working on the sea. Nearby is the Puzhou Hill, which combines a huge typical southern Chinese garden



with modern Western-style apartments that gleam in an orange colour. This is the centre of the new town of Nansha — the Puzhou New High-Tech Development Park. The Humen Bridge spans the Pearl River from Nansha across to the former strategic military point of Humen. Close to the passenger terminal of Nansha harbour the river bank is piled high with containers.

Town Arose from Wasteland

In 1991, I had a difficult journey to eastern Nansha on my way to see the ancient battlefield of the Opium War in Humen. Ferries there took people to the Upper and Lower Hengdang islands in mid-river to see the old cannon battlements. At the time, eastern Nansha was a wasteland with not a single trace of urban development, not to mention a harbour or a bridge. Now, eight years have passed and earth-shaking changes have created a miracle.

Nansha has become a key communications and transport hub on the Pearl River Delta. The



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Humen Bridge and large vehicle ferries have linked up economic arteries such as the Guangzhou-Shenzhen and Guangzhou-Zhuhai highways. Thousands upon thousands of cars, buses and trucks cross the river daily. One plan envisages Nansha as a model city of the 21st century, so this is just the start of things to come.

World's Largest Temple for the Goddess of the Sea

Tourist attractions are mostly clustered along the coastal area in the east. We started our tour from the Dajiao Hill at the Tianhou Temple, which is undoubtedly the most magnificent building in Nansha. It is believed to be the world's largest temple dedicated to this goddess and the building follows the traditions of the temple on the Meizhou Island in Fujian, believed to be the goddess' hometown. The structures fit snugly into the hilly terrain, rising up the slope, and render them with the air of a palace.

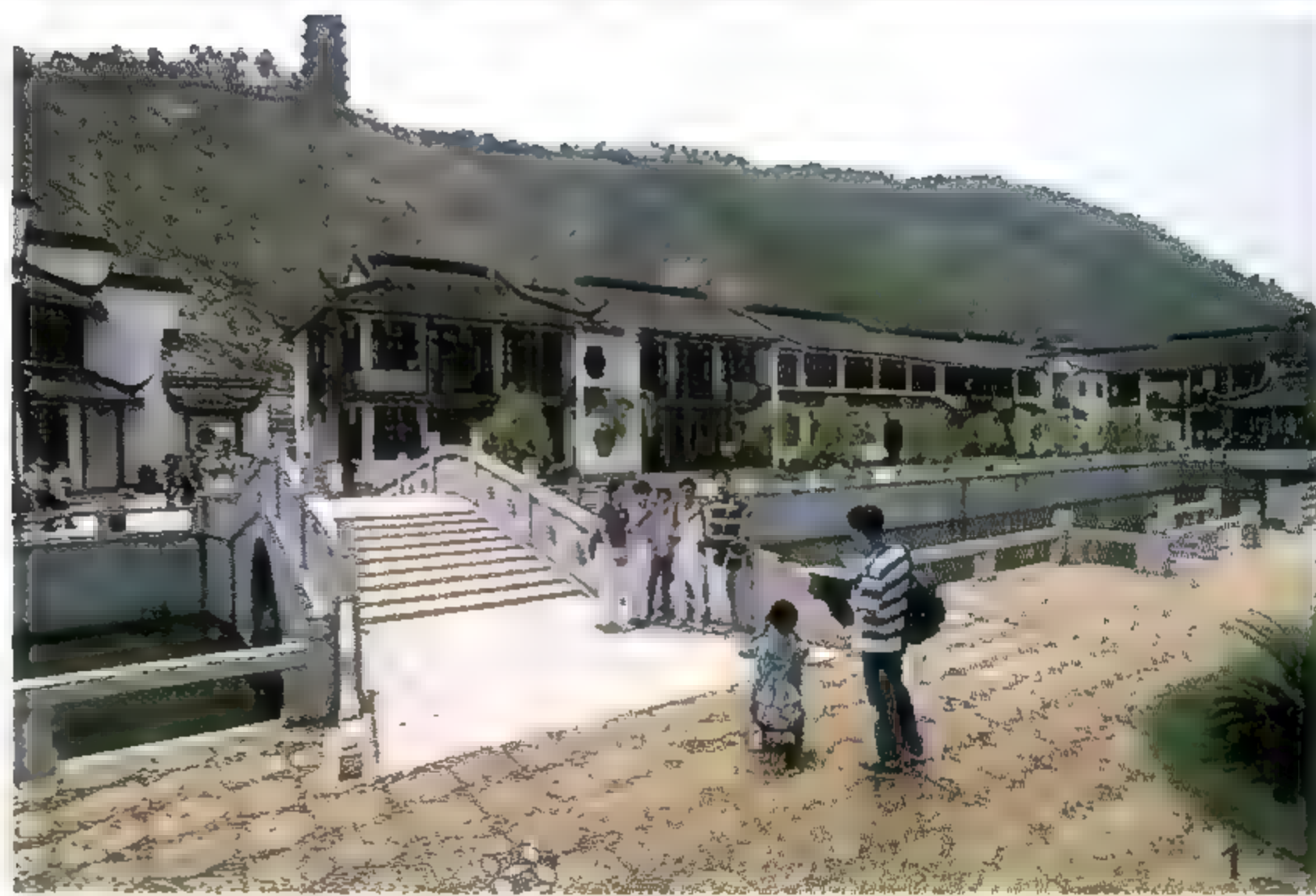
This goddess is the most highly esteemed one worshipped by

residents of China's coastal areas. Most coastal towns have a temple dedicated to her. Today, there are an estimated 2,500 such temples and 100 million worshippers throughout the world. As early as in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the Lujing Village at the foot of the hill had its Tianhou Temple. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by invading Japanese troops during World War II. The present temple compound has not only surpassed the old one in magnificence and grandeur, but is also much more symbolic. Since Nansha is set to become a sea transportation hub between Guangzhou and Hong Kong and a starting point of the "new Silk Road on the sea", the Goddess of the Sea



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1. The Puzhou New Hi-Tech Development Park is the core of Nansha.
2. Several daily passenger boats sail between Nansha and Hong Kong.
3. Dahushan (Big Tiger Hill) lying in the Zhujiang River
4. This battlement at Nanshan was part of the Humen Fortress where the Chinese resisted the British invaders during the Opium War.
5. Nansha Tianhou Temple is believed to be the world's largest temple devoted to the Goddess of the Sea.



Temple is regarded by the Nansha people as a symbol of safe sailing.

A road for vehicles leads all the way to the terrace of the temple, but devoted disciples always choose to first pray before the statue of the Goddess of the Sea in the square and then climb up the stairs. Their final destination is the Nanling Pagoda on the hilltop, where they are rewarded with the feeling of "having ascended the sky". The eight-storey pagoda provides an advantageous position for a panoramic view of

the Pearl River Delta. Looking north, you can have a clear view of N a n s h a , i t s International Park, Riverside Street, New Hi-Tech Development Park and the magnificent Humen Bridge.



Combined Architectural Styles

All along the Riverside Street are buildings in typical Suzhou garden style, with eye-catching, white-washed walls and black tile roofs. In the centre of the Suzhou Garden, two white marble arch bridges span a small river. On one side stand two-storey houses, towers and pavilions, and on the other side is a long corridor winding through small gardens.

A walk along the corridor offers a view across the river, with Dajiao Hill's green groves in the background, as beautiful as a scenery painting. The pagoda on top of the hill also forms a conspicuous part of the painting. Chairs are laid along the corridor where visitors can rest and admire the river scene, as many residents in Suzhou do from their homes built on the river banks.

The waitresses in the park's restaurant are also dressed in Suzhou attire and they warmly invite guests to taste Suzhou flavour dishes. Since it was too early for lunch when we arrived, we tried a local snack called Ginger Milk instead.



Though it was prepared by girls from Nansha, it had the authentic flavour of Shawan, the birthplace of the snack.

The Puzhou International Park extends all the way from the foot of the Dajiao Hill to the Puzhou Hill. All

kinds of flowers compete in the park. Western-style flower gardens trimmed into geometric

plans joins a lake where ducks and geese frolic. A teahouse stands on the lakeside, giving the impression of a southern Chinese life-style. In the northern part of the park there is the European continental-style Beer House offering drinks and meals. This was where we had our lunch feast.

Playing Golf at Night

After lunch, we toured the Puzhou New Hi-Tech Development Park which is a group of magnificent commercial buildings, including a grand conference and exhibition centre, a science museum with a super-modern atmosphere, a food court as well as a large central square and pedestrian shopping street. Construction is not complete so the complex cannot yet show off its multi-functional style.

The last part of our day was spent on the



Nansha Golf Course. Developed on a hilly land called Huangshanlu, the 36-hole course rises and falls with the slopes, linking up 20 to 30 ponds on the way. The great variation in topography makes it both challenging and interesting for enthusiasts of all levels. For people like myself who have not yet reached a professional level, the golf course school has instructors that will help you with the basics.

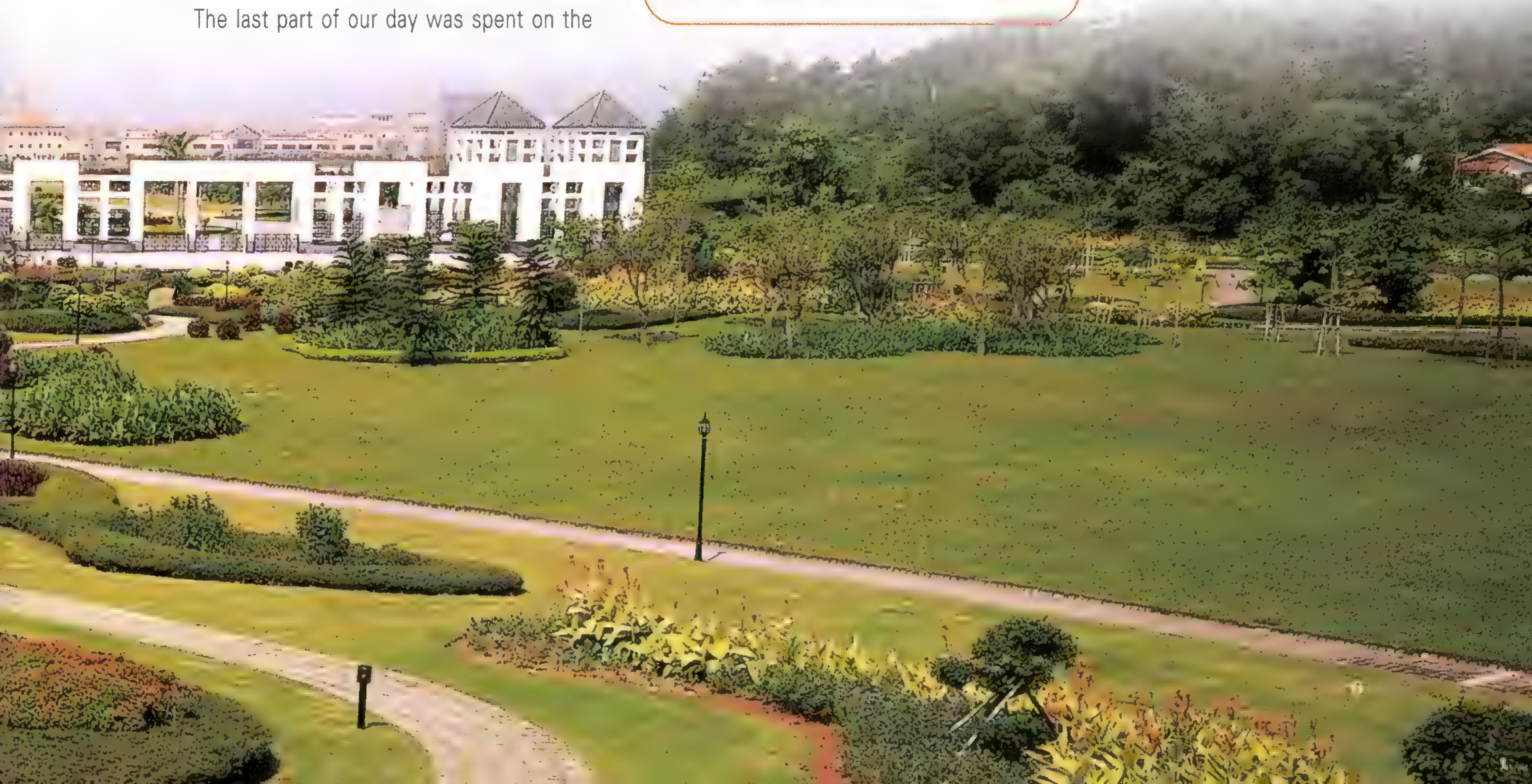
The games on the course go on till midnight, thanks to the outdoor lighting equipment. This golf course is reportedly the first one with night lights in the country.

Translated by F. Huang

Tips for the Traveller

There are several daily direct ferries between Hong Kong and Nansha. The town can also be easily reached by road from Guangzhou, Foshan and Zhuhai.

1. Suzhou Garden is built in the style of classic Suzhou gardens.
2. The Beer House
3. The Nansha Golf Course
4. The elegant teahouse in the Puzhou International Garden
5. A snack made of milk and ginger juice
6. The gorgeous scenery of the Puzhou International Garden





TENGCHONG

TERRESTRIAL HEAT, VOLCANOES AND HOMETOWN OF OVERSEAS CHINESE

Photos & article by Liu Dongping

Tengchong, a border county in southwest Yunnan, not only is endowed with interesting topographical scenery and many legendary stories, but is also home to many overseas Chinese.

The Wonders of a Geothermal Sea

I travelled 20 kilometres from the county seat in the morning dew to the site of Rehai, or Geothermal Sea, which is the most famous geothermal site in the county. A beautiful arched structure with glazed tiles marked the entrance into the site. By the side of the flower-flanked and tree-shaded road was a conspicuous huge boulder carved with two large Chinese characters in cursive script announcing this geothermal area, in the handwriting of Mr. Li Genyuan, a noted patriot.

The first sight that greeted my eyes here was a basin-shaped pond bubbling with boiling water, which is the most spectacular Boiling Pot of the nine-square-kilometre Geothermal Sea. Mist curled up, hot air brushed my face and the smell of sulphur assailed my nostrils as the water in the pond kept percolating in turmoil. The pond is 6.12 metres in diameter and 1.5 metres deep. Eight curved stone slabs laid on their sides create its octagonal shape. I looked down into the pond and found the clear water coming out of three holes at the bottom. Examinations show that the temperature of the water at the bottom of the pond is 102°C. Some local people told me that once an ox accidentally fell into the pond. By the time people brought it up, there was nothing left of the ox but the skeleton.

The ground around the pond resembles a huge steamer as dozens of holes sent out steam. Hot air and steamy water combine to form something like a huge pillar of air, which, going up and up around the pond, can be seen from kilometres away. The local people used the steam holes to cook sweet potatoes and potatoes, which were ready to eat in just over 10 minutes. It takes less time to boil eggs. The heat can also be used to cook rice and meat.

On the way down the slope from the Boiling Pot along the winding stone stairs, I saw many unique and interesting sites of geothermal fountains, which have been given vivid names such as Glasses Fountain, Pearl Fountain and Drum Fountain. What struck me most was the one on the side of the Bathroom Waterfall. Hot water near the boiling point gushes out from its huge frog-like mouth, evaporating hot air. The hot

fountain, shooting at an interval of two to three seconds, can reach a height of about 1.5 metres. No wonder that 400 years ago, Xu Xiake, the then most well-known traveller and geography scholar, made a special trip to visit here.

Around the fountains are many "fountain flowers", sediments of mineral elements deposited over time from the hot water shooting out from the fountains. They make all kinds of natural patterns and shapes on the rocks, sparkling like gold in the sunlight, to the delight of visitors.

By the Zaotang (Bath House) River, I discovered a sand pit, two metres square, also sending out hot air. I was told that this hot steam mouth had come into being only a year ago. Apparently, geothermal movements in Tengchong are very active. Currents underground flow and run into each other all the time and the earth surface may change at any moment, though to a very small degree. As a result, every year sees the sealing of some hot air holes and fountains, and the emergence of many new ones. This process sometimes is accompanied with terrifying sound of "cracking earth and roaring mountains".



On Top of a Volcano Crater

At dusk, we drove to Mazhan, 20 kilometres north of the county seat where three earth mounds stood on the vast expanse of red earth. These were not ordinary earth mounds but three young volcanoes, the Greater Kongshan, Lesser Kongshan and Black Kongshan.

1. The turbulent hot spring and the deposit it forms at the Geothermal Sea
2. The Boiling Pot, a spectacular view of Tengchong (by Wang Miao)



According to statistics, there are more than 70 volcanoes spread out on Tengchong's territory about 100 kilometres each way. Here is the youngest volcano group — the Quaternary Period volcanoes. Some of them erupted as recently as 300 years ago, leaving them still live with some gentle activity.

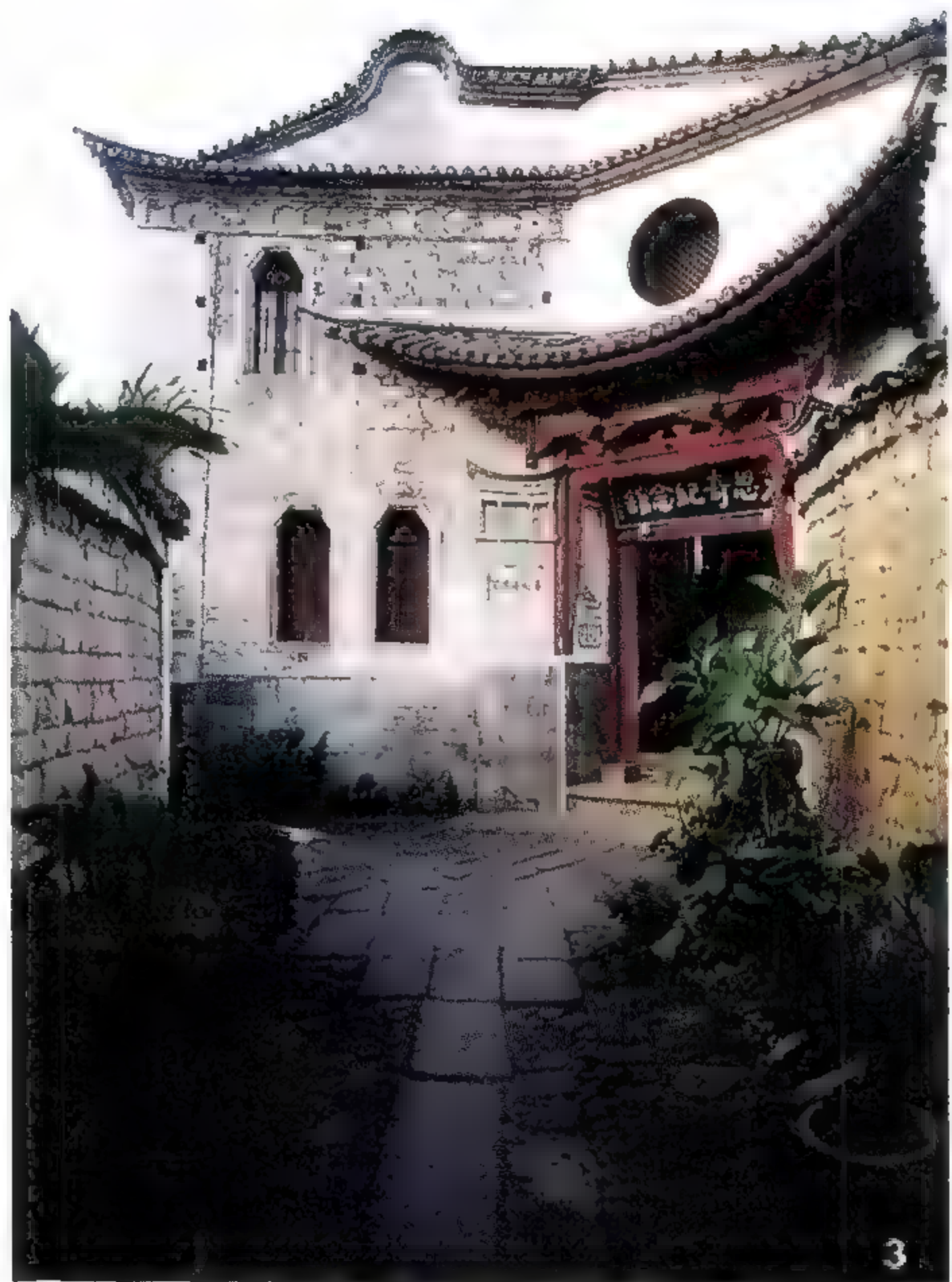
We pulled up at the foot of the volcanoes. As we had very little time, I decided to climb the lowest of the three — the Lesser Kongshan. Soon a crater 150 metres in diameter was in front of me. Lush green pine trees, which looked like a green ring, grew on the edges of the crater. The crater is said to be 70 metres deep. I looked down and, to my surprise, saw several people, the size of ants in the distance, moving at the bottom of the crater. I asked and was told they were down there collecting volcano rocks.

The mention of volcano rocks sent me walking along the edge of

the crater. From under a pine tree I picked up a stone, dark brown in colour and the size of an egg. People told me it was just a "volcano egg" and only the larger stones could be called volcano rocks. Still I found the stone very hard but extremely light with many holes on the surface like a piece of sponge. Volcano rocks come in several colours including brown, red, grey and black. Red ones are the lightest and they can float on water like a piece of wood. I put the brown "egg" in my pocket as a souvenir of my trip to the site.

1. Heshun, an ancient cultural town
2. Local women use geothermal heat to boil eggs. (by Lu Zhongmin)





I learned that these ones were not tall volcano mountains. The Daying Mountain, at an altitude of 2,614 metres, and resembling the Mount Fuji in Japan, is the tallest in Tengchong. Its crater measures 300 metres in diameter.

Volcanic eruptions have left Tengchong with two beautiful volcanic lakes called Sister Lakes which never dry up in a drought and never spill over in heavy rain. The colour of the water changes with the season, adding great beauty to the region.

The Unforgettable Heshun Town

The town of Heshun seemed to be a heaven of peace to me. There are residences of noted figures in history and small bridges over flowing streams, as is seen in typical southern China towns. Moreover, it also has a sense of mystery.

As our car approached the town, my sight was drawn to a crystal-clear river which wound its way by a village. A clothes-washing pavilion in plain classic style stood by the riverside, where village women clad in bright colours washed vegetables and clothes amidst intimate chit-chat and occasional hearty laughter. A flock of white geese swam by on the river, where the willows on the banks thrust their branches onto the river surface. I was simply mesmerised by the charming scenery.

Crossing the Twin-Rainbow Bridge, we

entered Shuizhui Village, the largest of its kind in the town. Every lane in the village was long and quiet, linking up many traditional Qing-dynasty houses.

I entered the courtyard of Mr. Yin, a man in his 40s. Only he and a 10-year-old child were at home. When I asked about his family and his house, Mr. Yin told me that the house had been handed down to his family through history since the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). One of his ancestors, who had been an official in Sichuan Province, built this house after he retired from office and returned to his countryside hometown. Now Yin's uncle is doing business in Myanmar and his seven brothers and sisters are mostly working away from home, some in Myanmar or Thailand, some in Shenyang in Northeast China. During the Spring Festival last year, the whole family came home for an exciting reunion.

At Shuizhui Village, there are many families like Mr. Yin's. It is obvious that this is a fairly large village which at some point had gone through careful planning in its layout and construction. Its past glory is still evident. There are several ancestral temples which still look magnificent, and are kept in good condition by careful maintenance. They are testimony to the impressive and dignified manner of the clans. Roaming through the lanes, I could not help imagining how hard the villagers and their ancestors must have worked to build their home village, and what a glorious and prosperous time they must have enjoyed in the bygone years.

- 3. The former residence of Ai Siqu, a famous philosopher (by Lu Zhongmin)
- 4. Children of Tengchong (by Wang Miao)





1. The plain clothes-washing pavilion, the crystal clear stream with its small bridge and the women washing their clothes and vegetables there form a poetic picture of peaceful rural life.

Opposite the entrance of each lane is a crescent-shaped terrace with stone railings, which either supports a camphor or banyan tree, or a screen-wall painted with beautiful landscape, believed to be able to bring good luck for the residents. Old people and children often gather at these places to enjoy a chat or a game.

At the end of a path through a bamboo grove on the bank of the Longtan (Dragon Pool) is a quadrangle house combining both traditional Chinese and Western architectural styles. This is the former residence of Ai Siqu, a well-known philosopher of the 20th century. On the lintel of the gate is a horizontal tablet announcing: Ai Siqu Memorial House.

According to a document I read there, over a period of 200 years from the end of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to the Qing Dynasty, the town produced an exceptionally large number of scholars. Specifically, eight were *juren*, successful provincial scholars who were candidates for the top imperial examinations, and hundreds of others who succeeded in other levels

of the examinations for scholars. At the turn of the 19th century, dozens of local students left Heshun to go abroad to study. Among those who returned to China, many became outstanding scholars in philosophy, political studies and economics. Even nowadays, one out of every 20 people of the township population is a college student. Moreover, two dozen natives have received education in the United States, Canada or Myanmar; some have completed doctorate studies in medicine and chemistry.

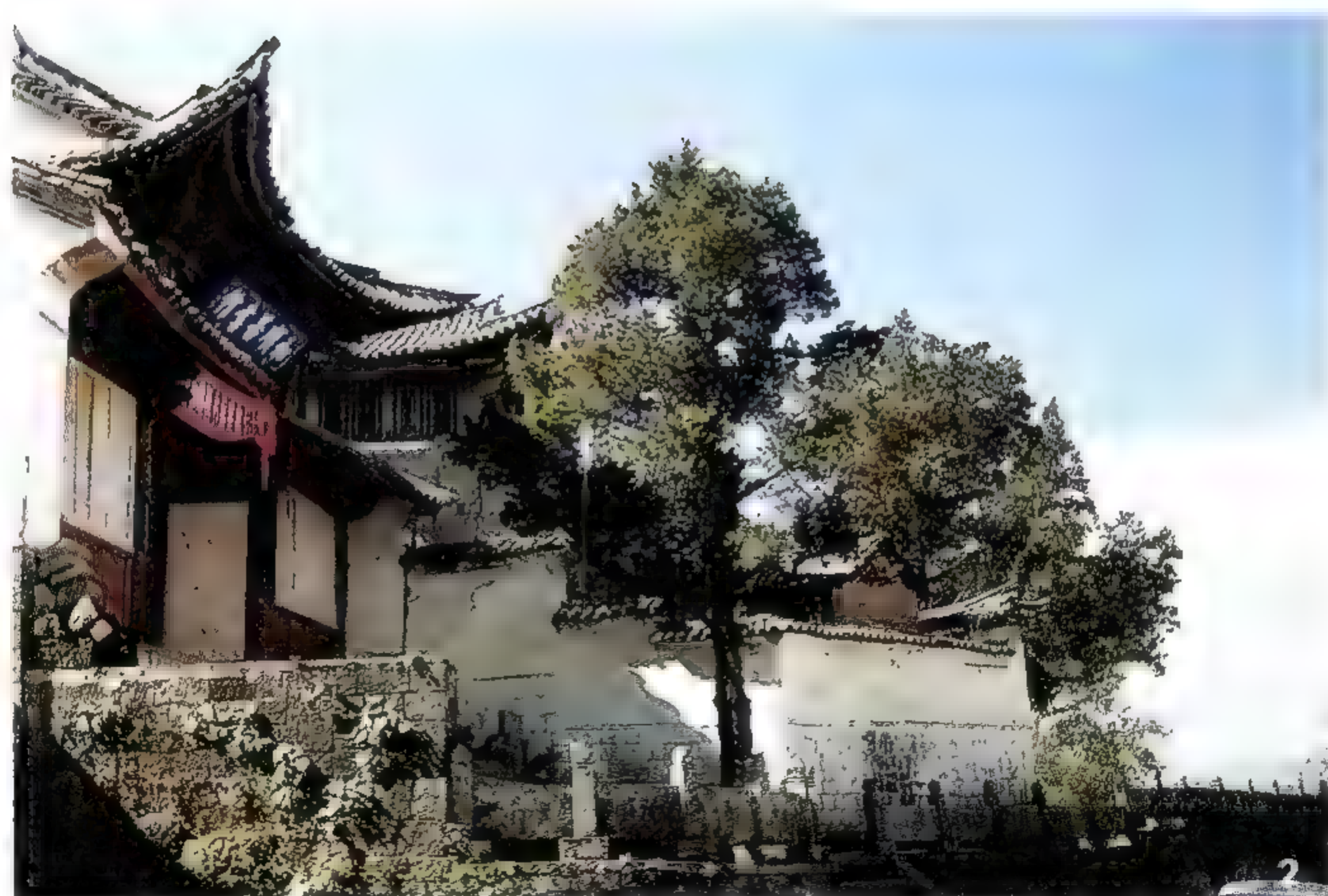
A Marvellous Township Library

At the entrance of Shuizhui Village stands an eye-catching building with gorgeously decorated pillars and upward-tilting eaves. It is hard for visitors to believe that this is a township-level library. The library is one more thing that makes the Heshun people feel proud of themselves — it is the first, largest and most well-equipped one of its kind in the country.

The Heshun Library was first established in 1928. Among its collection of over 60,000 copies

of books, many of which are rare editions, including the *Collected Works of Yang Sheng'an* from the 17th century and *Maps of Japan* from the Meiji period, many books printed by mobile wood blocks as well as the journals, *The East* and *Chinese Youth*, dating back to the early days of the 20th century. Besides, there are hand-copied books such as *The History of Nanzhao* and *The Book of the Southerners*. Manuscripts and books written by famous scholars such as Hu Shi, Lu Xun, Chen Duxiu and Guo Moruo as well as newspapers and magazines published by Chinese residing in Myanmar can also be found. Today, the library subscribes to over 120 kinds of newspapers and magazines.

The fact that the library has been able to maintain its standards to this day owes much to a veteran librarian called Liu Yupu. In 1940, Liu joined the library at the age of 18 and ever since then the library became part of his life. When the Japanese invaded Tengchong County, he, together with other library staff and local students, moved the library collections into the mountains to hide them. He even risked his own



life by staying in the library to keep it under watch until 1944 when the Japanese invaders were driven out.

Shortly before the cultural onslaught of the Red Guards' rebellion at the beginning of the "cultural revolution" in 1966, he hid away some of the most valuable library collections, had the horizontal tablet written with Source of Culture on the library gate covered up with slaked lime, and had inscriptions by Hu Shi and other outstanding scholars taken down and put away with other rare library objects. He thus saved them all from the relentless destruction of the Red Guards.

When the Red Guards wanted to take the library door apart, Mr. Liu tried all ways possible to stop them and eventually succeeded in dissuading them from doing so. The library and its collections were saved, but Mr. Liu was thrown into the prison for more than a year. What vision and courage Mr. Liu, a township librarian, must have had to be able to do what he did under the harsh environment and atmosphere of that time.

Today, the library itself remains an object of great historical value. It stands as a reminder of the steps taken by the Heshun people in pursuing civilisation, culture, democracy and progress, and it continues to exert its influence on the new generations of Heshun. 📖

Translated by F. Huang



2. The Heshun Library is the first, largest and best equipped among China's township libraries.

3. A young boy in an old house in Heshun



A Holiday of Hot Spring Bathing and Golf

Photos by Huang Yiming Article by Yan Hong

Three years ago I went to the Xinglong Paradise in Hainan Province for a holiday. It indeed seemed like a paradise with the warm sunshine, gentle sea breezes carrying the scent of coconuts, and clouds floating in the blue sky. The greatest enjoyment then was bathing in the hot spring, as pools for swimming, massaging and bathing were everywhere. I became so comfortable that I didn't want to leave.

On this trip I stayed at the same hotel, but found that many new cabins had sprouted up — all villas in Victorian or Spanish style surrounded by greenery. But the highlight was the new golf course at the Xinglong Paradise. The combination of hotel, hot spring and golf course is said to be the first of its kind in China.

The golf course is about three kilometres from the hotel. The special landscape of the tropics add a great lustre to the course. It has a vast hillside, dotted with grassland, coconut groves and a small lake. We decided to try our technique, and on learning that the course had been designed by the famous American golf course designer, Robert McFarland, we played with greater zeal. The 18-hole course makes full use of the original shape of the land. Compared with other similar golf courses, this one is more challenging and interesting. The undulating golf links, high tee boxes and dense patches of grass and woods, all increase the difficulty of the course. Even the bunkers are elaborately designed with coconut trees as obstacles.

Some holes have two routes, one for conservative players and the other for those who are more ambitious. Playing well on the challenging route depends on judgement and on-the-spot decisions, as well as skill. The most stimulating hole is No.17, which is on an islet with the green at its summit.

After the golf game we went to soothe our strained muscles in the hot spring pool. Inside the Hot Spring Garden there are open-air pools and Japanese-style log cabins, and lawns dotted with tropical plants like coconut trees and trident plum trees. The hot spring Jacuzzi is luxuriously equipped and uses ultrasonic technology, so the delightfully warm water changes directions for an "automatic" massage. You can adjust the regulators at will, and experience different encounters with the water. While you bathe, attendants wearing Hawaiian-style clothes deliver food and drinks and inform you about the hot spring's advantages. There are also special pools such as fruit-acid and medicinal ones, said to be effective in revitalising the skin and improving the appearance. It's not surprising that your fatigue dissipates instantly here.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



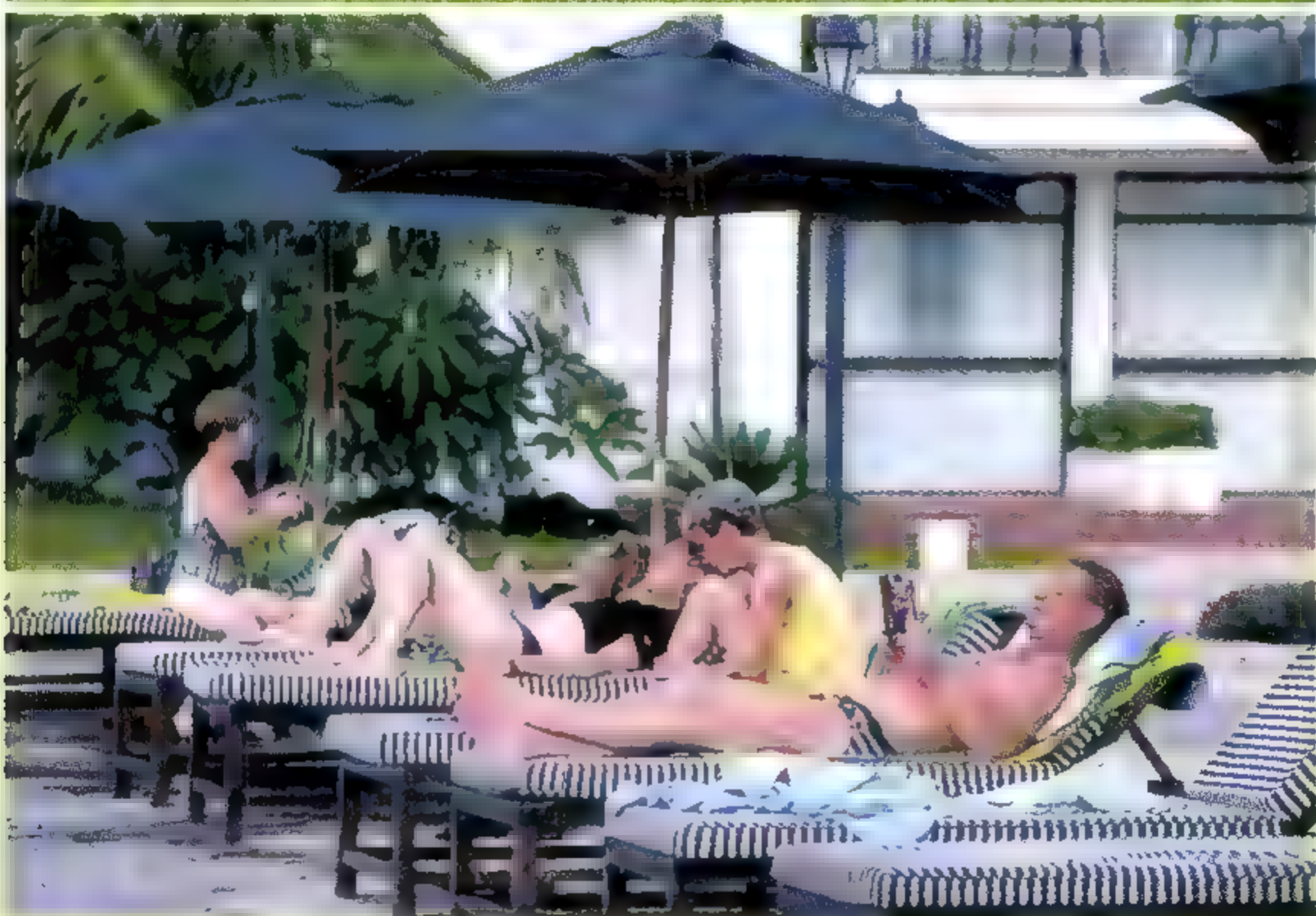


Tips for the Traveller

- **Address of Xinglong Paradise:** Xinglong, Wanning County, Hainan Province.
- **Transport:** Public buses start from Haikou Hotel in Haikou at 2:30 p.m. every day for the Paradise, 208 kilometres away. The journey takes four hours.
- **Accommodation:** Garden-view standard rooms: HK\$858; deluxe rooms: HK\$1,500.
- **A. Golf Package (three days/two nights):** HK\$880 per person, including:
 - Two nights lodging in a deluxe double room with a greenery and hot spring view;
 - Cafeteria breakfast;
 - Fees for a round of 18 holes plus caddie;
 - Hot spring baths at the Hot Spring Garden;
 - One hour of tennis, table tennis, billiards, or bowling free;
 - Free transfer for four and more persons from the airport in Haikou or Sanya.
- **B. Leisure Package (three days/two nights):** HK\$580 per person, including:
 - Two nights lodging in a deluxe double room with a greenery and hot spring view;
 - Cafeteria breakfast;
 - Half-day tour at the Dongshan Ridge and the tropical garden;
 - Free hot spring baths;
 - One hour of tennis, table tennis, billiards, or bowling free;
 - Free transfer for four and more persons from the airport in Haikou or Sanya.

Note: 1. The above packages are not valid during festivals or holidays;

2. For single room occupancy add HK\$200.



Travelling to Tibet elicited a whole range of emotional responses in me: the thrill of visiting China's last frontier, the awe of being on the roof of the world, the fear of altitude sickness and the anticipation of meeting Tibetans, who are famed for their friendliness.

The plan was to fly from Chengdu in Sichuan to Lhasa, but every travel agency in the Traffic Hotel said they did not sell air tickets. I had no choice but to sign up with a package tour that included three nights accommodation and a guided tour of Lhasa costing 3,300 yuan.



Happy Excursions in Tibet

Photos & article by Pierre Wong

Our ragtag group of backpackers from Japan, South Africa, France, America, Switzerland and Hong Kong got on the flight to Lhasa at 6:50 a.m. We landed at Gongga Airport, where the altitude was 3,500 metres, and then spent another hour and a half being driven to our hotel Tashitargay in Lhasa, where we were meant to rest and acclimatise to the high altitude. My Japanese roommate felt dizzy and had a headache; not wishing to disturb him, I went off in search of food.

After a good night's sleep we were herded and taken to our first sight, Drepung Monastery. Located at the foot of the

West Valley Mountain 10 kilometres outside Lhasa, Drepung is now one of the six largest monasteries of the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) Sect. In the 1950s there were over 10,000 monks there, making it the largest monastery in Tibet. Inside, the pious were constantly adding yak butter to the candles. This sight prompted our guide to explain that Tibetans believe that when one dies, the candles will light the way for them in the other world. I also noticed that the Buddha statues were covered in yards of silk. The different colours of silk represent different elements: white for the clouds, blue for sky, green for water, red for fire and yellow for earth.

The afternoon was set aside for Jokhang Temple, one of Tibet's holiest places, which is located on the side of Barkor Street that faces the main square. The temple is easily identified by its golden wheel flanked by two golden rams. Construction of the temple began in 647 during the reign of the Tubo king, Songtsan Gambo. The temple houses an alloy statue of the 12-year-old Sakyamuni that was presented by the Tang princess Wencheng.

Our third day in Lhasa was reserved for the Potala Palace. However, our original group had split up; some of us were on a four-day trip, while others had signed up for a seven-day one. As I waited in the hotel lobby, two of my Dutch friends walked in. We had run into each other three times on our travels in Sichuan and had joked we might see each other again in Tibet.



Observing Philosophic Discussions of the Monks

The Potala Palace was built in the 7th century during Songtsan Gambo's rule. The Fifth Dalai Lama had enlarged the structure in the 17th century, and the palace then assumed the role of being the Dalai Lama's residence and centre for political and religious affairs. The main building is divided into two sections: the Red Palace which was strictly used for religious purposes, and the White Palace, which was used as quarters and offices for secular affairs.

The final sight of the day was the Sera Monastery. This place is known for its monks holding philosophical discussions. The monks put questions to their colleagues and clap their hands at the end. According to our guide, mortals are semi-conscious; the sound from the clap is supposed to wake the monks up from their dream-like state. I asked the guide what sort of questions were being asked. A typical one would be: What colour is your sock? My sock is white would be considered a wrong answer, because a sock is not white. The correct answer would be, the colour of my sock is white. This reminded me of a Chinese saying: White horses are not horses.

was available for 40 yuan per person. The next morning I had to scrounge for hot water, and while doing so, I found that the monks were having a praying and chanting ritual. Together with one of the group, Liat, we questioned the head monk about the chanting. For the price of one roll of colour film, we were given a tour of the prayer room and told that the chanting sessions were irregular. The next session would probably be held next week.

The base camp was about seven kilometres from the monastery, and we had arrived on Saturday, the Jewish day of rest. Since two of our group were Orthodox Jews, they observed strict rules about not using and operating machinery, and walked all the way to the camp. I walked the scenic portion and took the Landcruiser the rest of the way. We were lucky — we had a cloud-free view of Qomolangma on the way.

Back at Rongbuk Monastery I decided to toast my small accomplishment by indulging in my favourite carbonated drink. This was a mistake as it made me dizzy and out of breath, just like altitude sickness, probably due to the quick absorption of the carbon dioxide at this high altitude.



Setting Out for the Qomolangma Base Camp

At this point in my tour I met a group of four Israelis who wanted to visit the Qomolangma (Mount Everest) Base Camp and were looking for two more people to share the travelling expenses. I could not resist their persuasive argument that this would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, so I laid down my 1,330 yuan and signed on for the six-day trip.

After one and a half days of driving, we arrived at Tingri Qomolangma National Nature Reserve. Admission costs 65 yuan per person and 400 yuan for the vehicle. By 6:30 p.m. we reached Rongbuk Monastery, where basic accommodation

Yamzho Yum Lake: Road Washed Out

The return journey to Lhasa took us through Lhazê, Xigazê, and Gyangzê. We arrived in Xigazê, the second largest city in Tibet, at noon and had lunch at one of the ubiquitous Tashi's restaurants, where our astute driver overheard some bad news. The route from Gyangzê to Yamzho Yum Lake was washed out. We decided to take our chances and see if the

1. The distinctive decorations of Jokhang Temple
2. A monk in the monastery garden
3. A distant view of Qomolangma
4. The author at the base camp



road had been repaired. When we got to Gyangzê, a CCTV crew advised us that the road to the lake was impassable. So, the only bit of sightseeing we did was at the Zongshan Mountain, where there is an old fort that played a part in the

repulsion of the invading British army in the mid-19th century. On our last day we again tried to go to the lake, but couldn't get near the shore at all. However, from our mountain top vantage point, we still got a decent view of the lake.

Tibet — a Dramatic and Enchanting Location

After returning from the base camp, I had a few more days in Lhasa which I used to visit the Norbu Lingka. It is in the outskirts of the city and easily reached by public transport. Its name means The Jewelled Garden and the compound has served as the summer palace of successive Dalai Lamas. At the residence, you can see the old Philips radio and gramophone and other personal belongings of the 14th Dalai Lama.

The driver we had for the trip to the base camp was quite apologetic over the sorry state of the Tibetan roads, and complained that Tibet was the most inhospitable place on earth. Once when he was griping, a hailstorm erupted and we had to dash for cover inside the Landcruiser. This happened throughout our trip: one minute we would be basking in the warm sun and the next moment on some mountain pass we could be standing in ankle-deep snow. In



between the two extremes we would also be treated to alternating rounds of rain and hail. This, however, was one aspect of Tibet, which I found so enchanting; a photographer could hardly wish for a more dramatic location. Silently, I wished that I could see it all again.

All the time I was in Tibet, I would wave and smile at passing Tibetans. Once on Barkor Street, I greeted a monk with the words "tashi dele". He shook my hand and would not let go until I indicated that I had to move along. During the Qomolangma trip I would wave and smile at everyone, and nine times out of 10, the adults would put down their farm tools and wave back, and the kids would jump for joy and wave as if Santa Claus had come to town. It occurred to me that simply by acknowledging their presence, offering friendly gestures or wishing them well, I evoked a sincere and enthusiastic response. To me, that was like striking gold.



1. Lighting the yak butter lamps
2. The fort on Zongshan Mountain
3. Yamzho Yum Lake viewed from the mountain top



Hotels in Yunnan

City	Name	Star	Address	Postcode	Tel	Fax
Kunming	Golden Dragon Hotel	****	575 Beijing Rd.	650011	(871) 3133015	(871) 3131082
	Kunming Hotel	****	145 Dongfeng Rd. E.	650051	(871) 3162063	(871) 3138220
	King World Hotel	****	28 Beijing Rd. S.	650011	(871) 3138888	(871) 3138656
	Green Lake Hotel		6 Cuihu Rd. S.	650031	(871) 5158888	(871) 5153286
	Holiday Inn Kunming	****	25 Dongfeng Rd. E.	650011	(871) 3165888	(871) 3135189
	Red River Hotel	***	124 Chuncheng Rd.	650041	(871) 3515666	(871) 3515668
	King Town Hotel	***	55 Huancheng Rd. S.	650041	(871) 3333918	(871) 3331128
	Jinshan Hotel	***	Beijing Rd. (North Train Station)	650051	(871) 5149069	(871) 5158727
	Jinli Hotel	***	71 Huancheng Rd. N.	650051	(871) 5153070	(871) 5155933
	Tea Garden Hotel	***	Yongping Rd.	650011	(871) 3559208	(871) 3548313
	Jinsui Tower	**	33 Dongfeng Rd. W.	650031	(871) 5310454	(871) 5320358
	Youlian Hotel	**	32 Beijing Rd. S.	650011	(871) 3559988	(871) 3537038
	Haitang Hotel	**	Dongjiao Rd.	650041	(871) 3319668	(871) 3313640
	Camellia Hotel	**	154 Dongfeng Rd. E.	650041	(871) 3164403	(871) 3147033
Jinghong	Xishuangbanna Dai Garden Hotel	****	8 Nonglin Rd. S.	666100	(691) 2123888	(691) 2126060
	Xinmin Int'l Hotel		2 Jingde Rd. E.	666100	(691) 2126888	(691) 2132880
	Jindu Hotel		Jinghong Holiday Resort	666100	(691) 2140888	(691) 2124995
	Crown Hotel	***	Xishuangbanna Holiday Resort	666100	(691) 2128888	(691) 2127270
	Banna Hotel	**	11 Galan Rd. C.	666100	(691) 2122086	(691) 2126501
	Jinghong Hotel	**	16 Galan Rd. C.	666100	(691) 2123166	(691) 2126947
Lijiang	Lijiang Guanfang Hotel		Xueshan Rd. C.	674100	(888) 5188888	(888) 5181999
	Grand Lijiang Hotel		Xinyi St., Dayan Town	674100	(888) 5128888	(888) 5125878
Dali	Manwan Hotel		Dali Canglang Rd.	671000	(872) 2188188	(872) 2181739
	Cangshan Hotel Dali		118 Cangshan Rd.	671000	(872) 2171666	(872) 2127252
	Asia Star Hotel Dali		Holiday Resort, South Suburbs of Gucheng	671003	(872) 2670009	(872) 2670399
Ruili	Kaitong Int'l Hotel	****	Biancheng St.	678600	(692) 4149528 -2189	(692) 4149526
	Ruili New Century Hotel		Maohan Rd.	678600	(692) 4142446	(692) 4143385
	Fuhao Hotel	***	Jiegao Economic Development Zone	678600	(692) 4666688	(692) 4666901
Zhongdian	Dêqên Bitá Hotel		Changzheng Rd.	674400	(887) 8228008	(887) 8223776
	Dêqên Hotel		Changzheng Rd.	674400	(887) 8222932 -6106	(887) 8227599
	Dêqên Tourist Hotel		Hongqi Rd.	674400	(887) 8227406	(887) 8228084

Hotels in Shaanxi

City	Name	Star	Address	Postcode	Tel	Fax
Xi'an	Grand Castle Hotel Xi'an	*****	12 West Section, Huancheng Rd. S.	710068	(29) 7231800	(29) 7231500
	Shangri-La Golden Flower Hotel	*****	8 Changle Rd. W.	710032	(29) 3232981	(29) 3235477
	Hyatt Regency	*****	158 East St.	710001	(29) 7231234	(29) 7216799
	Sheraton Xi'an Hotel	*****	12 Fenghao Rd.	710077	(29) 4261888	(29) 4262983
	Xi'an Garden Hotel	****	4 Dongyanyin Rd., Dayanta	710061	(29) 5261111	(29) 5261998
	Grand New World Hotel Xi'an	****	48 Lianhu Rd.	710002	(29) 7216868	(29) 7214222
	Xi'an Hotel	****	36 North Section, Chang'an Rd.	710061	(29) 5261351	(29) 5261796
	Jianguo Hotel Xi'an	****	20 Jinhua Rd. S.	710048	(29) 3238888	(29) 3235145
	Le Garden Hotel	****	8 Laodong Rd. S.	710068	(29) 4263388	(29) 4263288
	Bell Tower Hotel Xi'an	***	Southwest corner of Bell Tower	710001	(29) 7279200	(29) 7218767
	Wannian Hotel Xi'an	***	11B Changle Rd. C.	710032	(29) 3231932	(29) 3235460
	City Hotel	***	5 South St.	710002	(29) 7219988	(29) 7216688
	Dynasty Hotel Xi'an	***	55 North Section, Huancheng Rd. W.	710082	(29) 7212718	(29) 7212728
	Tangcheng Hotel Xi'an	***	3 South Section, Hanguang Rd.	710061	(29) 5265711	(29) 5261041
	Sino Pearl Hotel	***	8 South Section, Huancheng Rd. E.	710048	(29) 3233888	(29) 3235962
	Xi'an People's Hotel	***	319 Dongxin St.	710004	(29) 7215111	(29) 7218152
	China Merchants Hotel	***	131 Heping Rd.	710001	(29) 7218988	(29) 7218588
	Orient Hotel	***	26 Xiaozhai Rd. W.	710061	(29) 5262211	(29) 5261768
	Empress Hotel	***	45 Xingqing Rd.	710048	(29) 3232999	(29) 3236988
	Concord Hotel Xi'an	***	28 Fenghao Rd. E.	710077	(29) 7242811	(29) 7241939
	Longhai Hotel	***	278 Jiefang Rd.	710004	(29) 7416090	(29) 7416580
	Qomolangma Hotel	**	55 Youyi Rd. E.	710054	(29) 7211980	
	Hawaii Hotel	**	54 Youyi Rd. E.	710054	(29) 7251288	(29) 7251128
	Shaanxi Sports Hotel	**	Inside the Shaanxi Sports Stadium	710061	(29) 7251344	
	Jiefang Hotel	**	Railway Station Square	710004	(29) 7212927	(29) 7212617
	Northwest Hotel	**	Youyi St., Weiqu Town	710100	(29) 5292191	
Yan'an	Yan'an Hotel	**	Zhongxin St.	716000	(911) 2113122	
Yulin	Yulin Hotel	**	4 Hubin Rd. S., Yulin	719000	(912) 3282968	
	Shenmu Hotel	**	Tuofeng Rd., Shenmu	719300	(912) 8312307	

Flights to and from Xi'an

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Xi'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0735	0915	CA1215
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0830	1000	WH2106
	1 2 4 5 6	0900	1035	X2 119
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1120	1300	WH2124
	4	1240	1620	2Z 186
	2 4	1310	1445	X2 187
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1330	1510	WH2110
	5 7	1400	1535	X2 187
	3 7	1410	1605	CA1225
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1425	1615	CA1201
	1 3 5	1625	1800	WH2604
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1640	1820	WH2128
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1710	1850	WH2108
Xi'an — Beijing	4	0835	1210	2Z 185
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0845	1005	WH2123
	1 3 5	0930	1110	WH2603
	1 4 6	0950	1130	CA1220
	2 3 5 7	0950	1435	CA1216
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1105	1230	WH2109
	3	1425	1545	SZ4131
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1440	1610	WH2107
	3 7	1645	2140	CA1226
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1700	1830	WH2105
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1715	1900	CA1202
	2 4	2005	2130	X2 188
	5 7	2105	2235	X2 188
Changsha — Xi'an	3	1555	1750	CZ8737
	1 4	1600	1735	WH2386
	2	1610	1805	XO9382
	6	1635	1815	WH2314
	7	1650	1820	CZ8737
Xi'an — Changsha	1 4	0910	1045	WH2385
	6	1040	1155	WH2313
	2	1330	1520	XO9381
	3	1830	2000	CZ8738
	7	1900	2030	CZ8738
Dunhuang — Xi'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1055	1320	WH2232
	2 4 6	1140	1510	XO9217
	2 4 6	1915	2140	WH2228
Xi'an — Dunhuang	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0735	1015	WH2231
	2 4 6	1550	1835	WH2227
	2 4 6	1615	2000	XO9218
Fuzhou — Xi'an	1 3 5	0800	1030	MU5287
	2 4 7	0845	1145	IV8203
	2 6	1030	1305	WH2508
Xi'an — Fuzhou	2 6	0750	0945	WH2507
	1 3 5	1120	1325	MU5288
	2 4 7	1230	1525	IV8204
Guilin — Xi'an	2 5	1420	1600	WH2390
	3 6	1600	1755	XO9306
	1 4 6	1625	1805	WH2340
	4 7	1805	1950	WH2308
	2 3 5 6	2020	2155	WH 206

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Xi'an — Guilin	1 4 6	0730	0915	WH2339
	2 5	0810	0940	WH2389
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	1020	WH2329
	1 2 4 5 6	1130	1305	X2 119
	3 6	1315	1520	XO9305
	2 3 5 6	1400	1545	WH 205
	4 7	1545	1725	WH2307
	3 7	1645	1845	CA1226
Haikou — Xi'an	1 3 5 7	0705	1040	H4 267
	2 4 6	0730	1010	H4 167
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0845	1235	CZ3203
	3 7	1110	1350	WH2316
	1 4	1340	1735	WH2386
Xi'an — Haikou	3 7	0750	1035	WH2315
	1 4	0910	1300	WH2385
	1 3 5 7	1140	1510	H4 268
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1325	1700	CZ3204
	2 4 6	1425	1655	H4 168
Nanjing — Xi'an	2 6	0830	1025	MU5233
	1 3 5	1320	1520	WH2865
	4 6 7	1630	1825	WH2865
	2	1740	1940	WH2865
Xi'an — Nanjing	2 6	1115	1300	MU5234
	1 3 5	1605	1755	WH2866
	4 6 7	1905	2035	WH2866
	2	2020	2210	WH2866
Qingdao — Xi'an	2 4 7	0730	1150	SC 765
	1 3 5 6	0745	1150	SC 765
	4 7	1705	1915	WH2574
	1 3 5	1735	1930	WH 290
Xi'an — Qingdao	1 3 5	0900	1045	WH 289
	1 3 5 6	1320	1700	SC 766
	4 7	1415	1625	WH2573
	2 4 7	1705	2100	SC 766
Shenzhen — Xi'an	1 3 5	0945	1205	4G 835
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1255	1515	WH2326
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1615	1830	CZ3251
Xi'an — Shenzhen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1000	1210	WH2325
	1 3 5	1245	1505	4G 836
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1920	2140	CZ3252
Zhengzhou — Xi'an	2 4 7	1015	1150	SC 765
	1 3 5 6	1025	1150	SC 765
Xi'an — Zhengzhou	1 3 5 6	1320	1420	SC 766
	2 4 7	1705	1815	SC 766
Airline codes: CA = Air China CZ = China Southern Airlines H4 = Hainan Airlines IV = Fujian Airlines MU = China Eastern Airlines SC = Shandong Airlines SZ = China Southwest Airlines WH = China Northwest Airlines XO = Xinjiang Airlines X2 = China Xinhua Airlines 2Z = Chang'an Airlines 4G = Shenzhen Airlines				

* For reference only.



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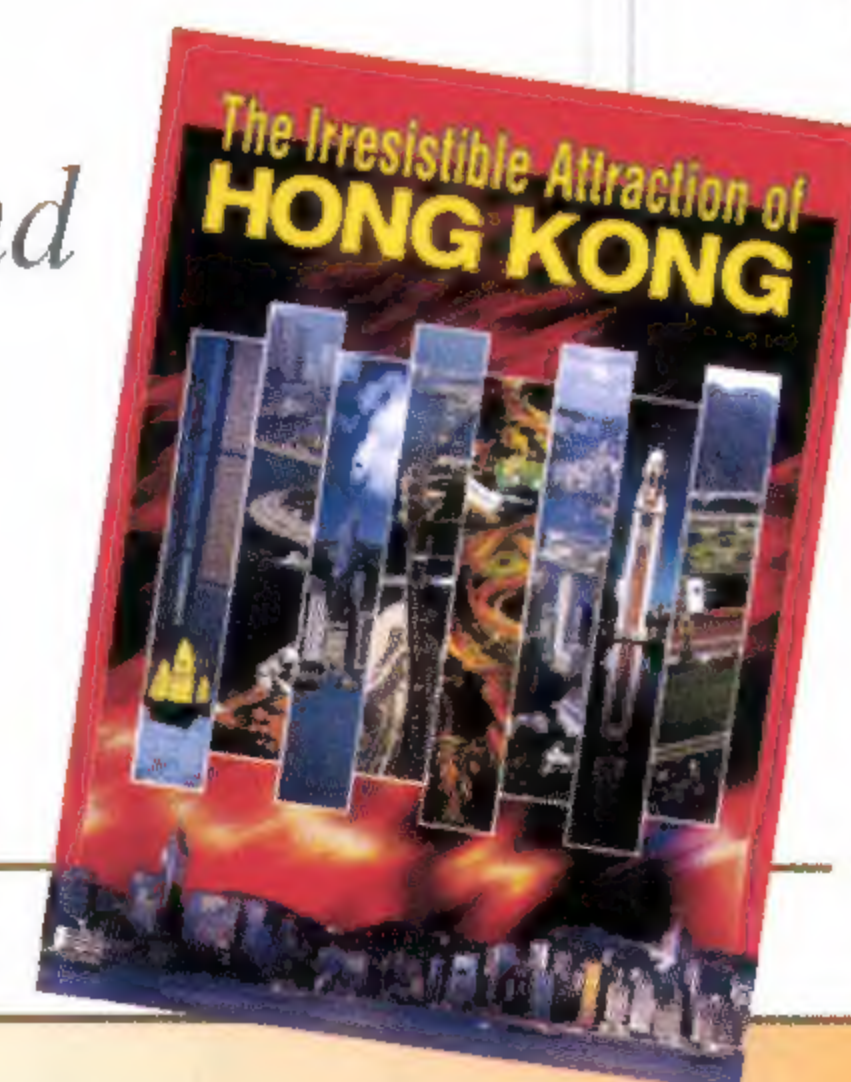
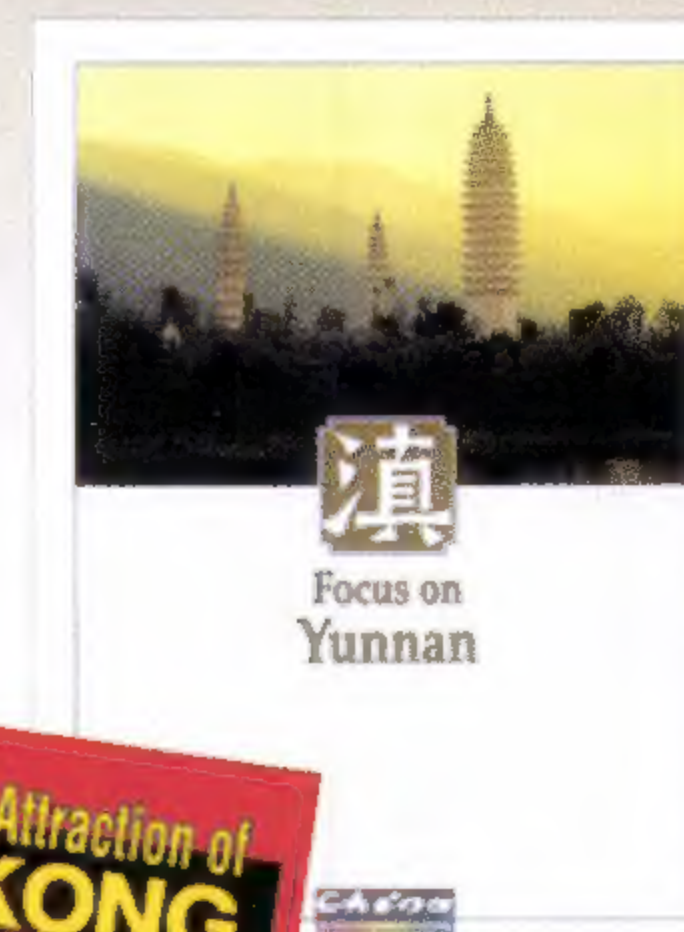
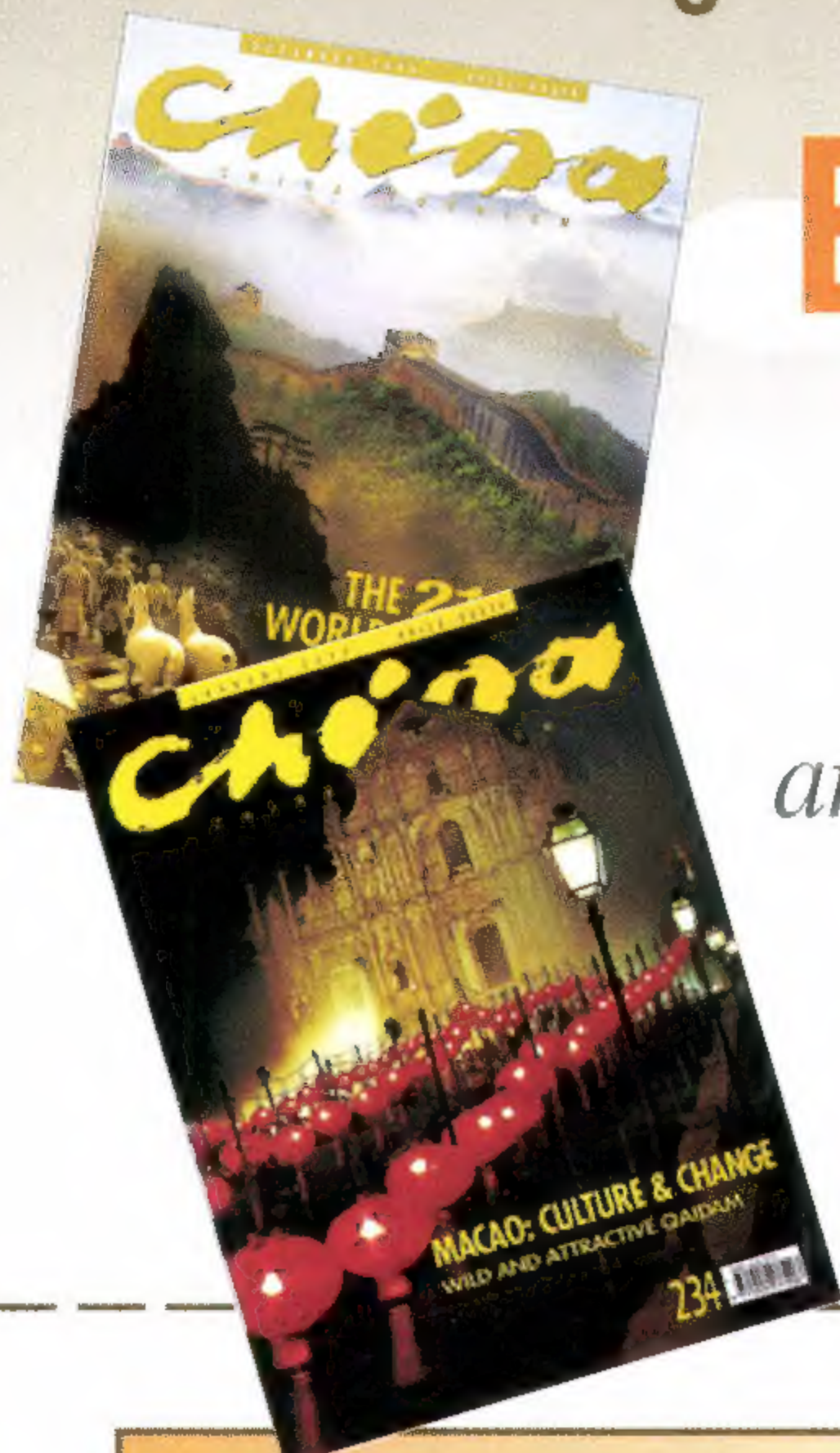
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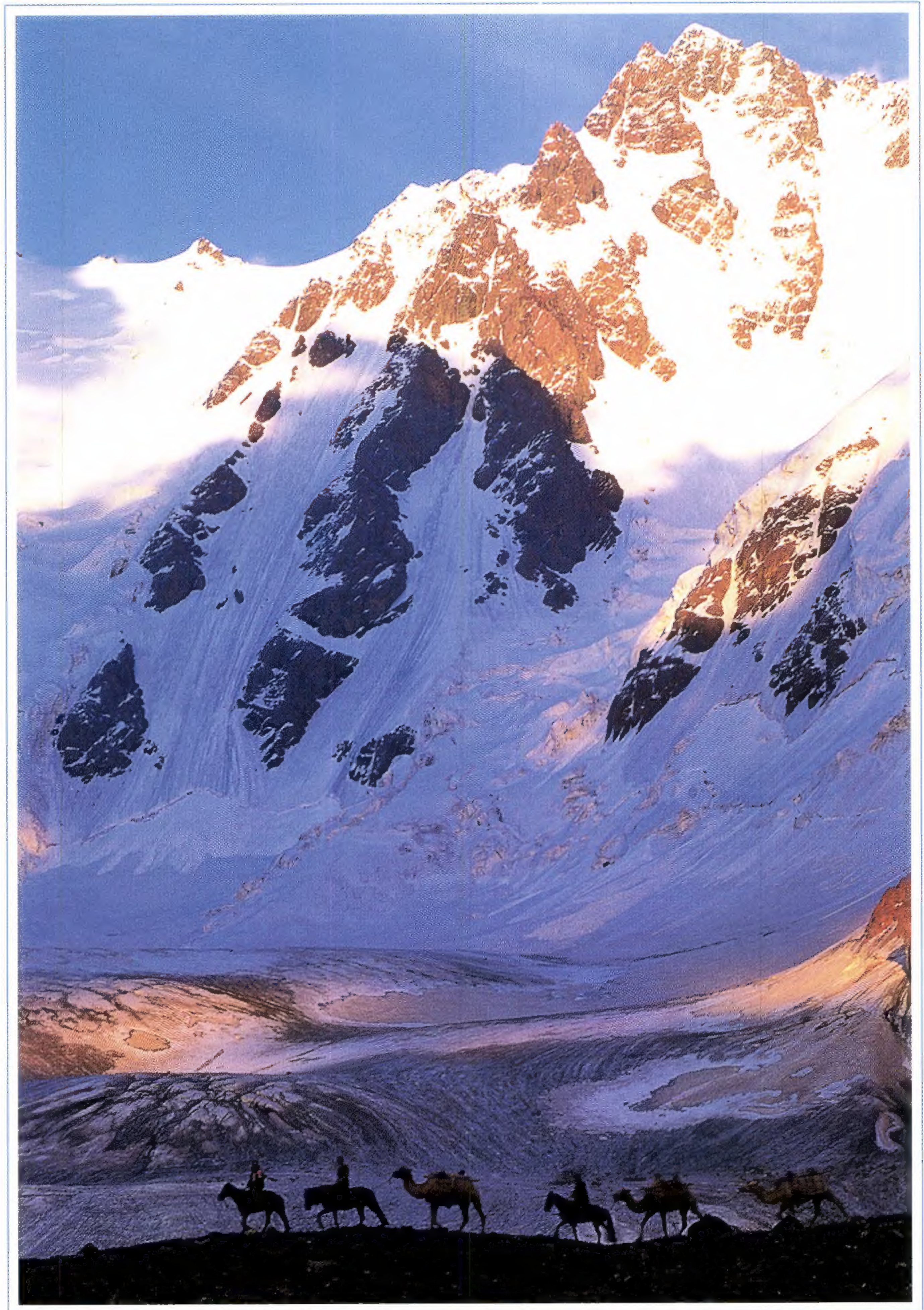
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- Many historical figures have passed through the scenic land of **Tianshan Mountains in central Xinjiang**, including the Han-dynasty envoy Zhang Qian, the Tang-dynasty monk Xuan Zang, the Qing-dynasty official Lin Zexu, and numerous merchants travelling the ancient Silk Road. Following in their footsteps to explore the Tianshan Mountains today, you will see many new things in addition to the historical sites — the colourful capital city of Urūmqi and the anemo-electric plant in Dabancheng. You will not, of course, miss the beautiful scenic spots in this area, such as the ice-capped Bogda Peak, the irresistible Heavenly Lake, the captivating Sayram Lake, and the Gongnas Grassland, the habitat of the heavenly horses.
- We will take you to **Zigong, the home of salt**, in Sichuan. This city has had a history of 2,000 years of salt production from well water and gained a reputation as the largest base for production of this kind of salt in China. The Zigong people's technique of mining salt from a well is regarded as China's fifth greatest invention.



- It is widely known that Buddhism is followed by the majority of Tibetans. A scholar from Switzerland toured the area around the two holy sites — **Mount Bonri and Lake Dangra** — of the original **Bon religion** of the local Tibetans. He will share with us his experiences of ascending the mountain with pilgrims and walking around the lake.



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